



2025 Board Election: Candidate Q&A

Candidate Name: Tony Bixby, MBA, NRP, CCEMT-P, FP-C

1. How would you describe your leadership style, and how has it shaped your work in EMS?

- I would describe my leadership style as a blend of servant leadership and situational leadership, shaped through years of personal experience, formal training, and mentorship.
- I believe in leading by example, supporting and empowering my team to deliver the highest level of patient care. Through a servant leadership lens, I focus on creating an environment where team members feel heard, respected, and motivated to grow. At the same time, situational leadership allows me to adapt my approach based on the needs of the moment, whether that's taking a more direct approach during a critical call or collaborative during training and development.
- EMS is inherently dynamic, and leadership in this field requires both flexibility and consistency in values. I recognize that every team member learns and responds differently, and I tailor my coaching and mentoring style accordingly. The Lighthouse Leadership Program reinforced these principles, helping me lead with both humility and purpose.
- A pivotal moment in my leadership journey was being selected for the inaugural NAEMT Lighthouse Leadership Program, where I had the opportunity to learn from some of the most respected leaders in EMS. The program challenged me to develop greater self-awareness, refine my communication skills, and embrace ethical decision-making—all crucial for navigating the complexities of emergency medical services leadership.
- As a result, I've contributed to building a stronger, more resilient team culture, one that prioritizes excellence, adaptability, and compassion.

2. In what ways do you advocate for EMS? What strategies would you recommend for NAEMT to strengthen its advocacy efforts and gain recognition for EMS as an essential service?

- I advocate for EMS by promoting its value, professionalism, and essential role within both the healthcare and public safety systems. This advocacy spans all levels, from local township meetings to national legislative offices, and focuses on raising awareness, building relationships, and pushing for policies that support EMS providers and the communities we serve.
- Over time, I've learned the power of strategic storytelling, combining data with real-world impact to help non-EMS stakeholders understand that EMS is far more than transportation. It's a critical, front-line component of both healthcare and public safety, deserving of recognition and support.
- I am proud to currently serve on the Board of Directors for the Ambulance Association of Pennsylvania, where I work alongside a dedicated group of EMS advocates who work

tirelessly to improve our current EMS system. Myself and my EMS agency also regularly collaborate with township supervisors, county commissioners, and state legislators to raise awareness of EMS challenges and identify collaborative, forward-thinking solutions.

- At the national level, I've participated in the NAEMT EMS on the Hill Day for several years, meeting with U.S. Representatives and Senators to advocate for federal support and policy change. These experiences have shown me firsthand the impact of a well-informed, unified voice in shaping public policy.
- To strengthen NAEMT's advocacy efforts further, I recommend the following key strategies:
 - 1. Unified National Messaging:
 - Develop a consistent, nationwide campaign that positions EMS as an essential, integrated part of the healthcare system—while allowing flexibility for regional messaging based on local needs. This collaboration is also important not just within NAEMT, but also with other EMS organizations and associations.
 - 2. Federal Recognition of EMS as an Essential Service:
 - Continue supporting initiatives such as the EMS Counts Act (H.R. 3791) and other efforts to formally designate EMS as an essential service at the federal level, ensuring stable funding and infrastructure support.
 - 3. Leverage Data and Storytelling:
 - Use a combined approach of outcome data, workforce statistics, and compelling personal stories to make a strong case for EMS investment. Encourage patients and families to share testimonials about how EMS has impacted their lives.
 - 4. Grassroots Advocacy Training for Providers:
 - Expand access to advocacy training so that EMS professionals at all levels feel confident engaging with lawmakers, media, and the public. Equip them with the tools and communication skills needed to build meaningful relationships and advocate effectively.
 - 5. Strategic Healthcare Partnerships:
 - Strengthen collaborations with hospitals, public health agencies, and emergency management organizations to highlight EMS's role in care continuity, especially in rural and underserved areas.

3. How can NAEMT better support and develop the EMS workforce, particularly newer generations? How would you convey the value of membership to both current and future members?

- To effectively support and develop the evolving EMS workforce, particularly the newer generations, NAEMT must continue to grow as both a professional resource and a powerful advocate for provider well-being, career development, and recognition.
- The EMS landscape is shifting rapidly. Today's workforce is looking for more than clinical excellence, valuing work-life balance, mental health support, meaningful engagement, and opportunities for career growth. To meet these needs and ensure long-term sustainability in our profession, NAEMT can expand its reach and relevance in several key ways:
 - 1. Expand Career Pathway Resources
 - Newer EMS professionals often ask, "Where can this career take me?" NAEMT can help answer that question by developing:

- Structured career pathway maps
- Develop opportunities to collaborate with other peers and industry leaders
- Expanded mentorship and leadership development opportunities such as the Lighthouse Leadership Program.
- This gives providers a clearer vision of the profession's possibilities and encourages long-term investment in their careers.
- 2. Modernize Education and Training Delivery
- To remain accessible and engaging, NAEMT should continue to innovate its educational platforms by offering:
 - Digital, on-demand, and mobile-friendly content
 - Micro-learning formats tailored to fast-paced EMS lifestyles.
- These formats resonate especially well with younger professionals and support ongoing competency in a more flexible, learner-centered way.
- 3. Continue to Prioritize Mental Health and Resilience Training
- Burnout and mental health challenges continue to take a toll on the EMS workforce. NAEMT can lead by providing:
 - Continued support for MHRO program and other evidence-based mental health resources
 - Resilience training and trauma-informed care strategies
 - Peer support networks that foster connection and understanding.
- This investment in provider well-being is critical for retention and long-term workforce health.
- 4. Amplify Provider Voices
- It's essential that newer professionals feel seen, heard, and valued. NAEMT can foster this through:
 - Advisory panels and working groups inclusive of early-career providers
 - Member spotlights and storytelling platforms
 - Ongoing opportunities to engage in advocacy, education, and leadership which allows professionals to feel connected to the larger mission
- To convey the value of NAEMT membership to current and future members, I would emphasize that NAEMT is more than a professional association, it's a platform for change, connection, and growth. NAEMT membership offers its members things such as:
 - Access to high-quality, relevant education
 - Representation at the national level on key issues impacting EMS
 - A network of like-minded professionals dedicated to elevating the profession
 - Opportunities to lead, serve, and shape the future of EMS
- For newer generations especially, NAEMT represents more than just career support, it's a community committed to their success and well-being. It helps members not only survive the demands of EMS, but truly thrive—personally, professionally, and as part of a movement to strengthen and sustain our field for the future.

4. What is a pressing issue currently facing EMS and how could NAEMT help address it?

- One of the most pressing issues currently facing EMS is the national workforce shortage, driven by a combination of low wages, burnout, limited career advancement, and a continued lack of recognition of EMS as an essential healthcare service.

- This shortage is more than an operational inconvenience. It threatens response times, patient outcomes, and the sustainability of the entire EMS system, while placing overwhelming pressure on the professionals who remain in the field.
- While the roots of this crisis are complex and multifactorial, there are several clear and impactful ways NAEMT can play a central leadership role in addressing the issue:
 - 1. Advocate for EMS as an Essential Service
 - At the core of many workforce challenges is the fact that EMS is not universally recognized as an essential service. NAEMT must continue to lead federal and state-level advocacy efforts that seek permanent recognition of EMS as a critical component of the healthcare and public safety infrastructure. This designation is essential to:
 - Secure stable funding
 - Improve wages and benefits
 - Integrate EMS more fully into emergency preparedness and healthcare delivery systems
 - 2. Invest in Workforce Retention & Wellness
 - Retention is just as critical as recruitment. NAEMT can help EMS professionals build long-term, sustainable careers by:
 - Expanding access to mental health and wellness programs
 - Providing resilience training and support networks
 - Offering career development and leadership opportunities to encourage professional growth. By focusing on the health and longevity of the workforce, NAEMT can help reduce turnover and improve job satisfaction.
 - 3. Strengthen Pipelines Through Education Partnerships
 - Recruitment begins early and is never-ending. NAEMT can collaborate with EMS training programs, high schools, and community colleges to raise awareness of EMS as a viable, rewarding career. Key initiatives could include:
 - Scholarship programs
 - Mentorship opportunities
 - Early exposure and career awareness campaigns targeting young people and underrepresented communities
 - 4. Promote Data-Driven Policy Solutions
 - To influence meaningful change, we need compelling data. NAEMT is uniquely positioned to gather and share workforce data that highlights the scope of the crisis to include:
 - Staffing levels
 - Turnover rates
 - Wage disparities
 - Regional and rural workforce gaps. This data is critical for arming policymakers and stakeholders with the evidence needed to drive reform.
- Addressing the EMS workforce crisis demands bold leadership, strategic advocacy, and long-term commitment. NAEMT is uniquely positioned to convene stakeholders, from field providers to national policymakers, and implement meaningful, systemic solutions.

- The future of EMS depends on our ability to attract, support, and retain the professionals who make this work possible. NAEMT must continue to lead with vision, courage, and a deep commitment to the people behind the profession.