



2025 Board Election: Candidate Q&A

Candidate Name: Michael A. Kaduce MPS, NRP

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

- My leadership style is rooted in collaboration, long-term vision, and a deep belief in people and purpose. I strive to lead with humility, clarity, and accountability, anchored by the principle that strong leaders elevate others rather than centering themselves.
- In *Good to Great*, one of my favorite reads, Jim Collins describes what he calls “Level 5 Leadership,” a blend of personal humility and professional will. This framework deeply resonates with me. The most effective leaders I’ve known in EMS are not always the loudest voices in the room. They’re the ones who build systems that outlast them, support teams that outperform expectations, and keep their focus on mission over ego. That’s the kind of leader I work to be.
- As Director of the Falck Health Institute and former EMT Program Director at UCLA, I’ve led teams through growth, change, and uncertainty. I’ve built EMT programs from the ground up, managed through regulatory challenges, expanded NAEMT training capacity internationally, and helped launch innovative platforms that support instructors and students alike. But none of that happens alone. I believe in creating space for subject matter experts, faculty, and students to contribute meaningfully, whether we’re redesigning a course or reimagining how we support the next generation of EMS professionals.
- At NAEMT, this approach has guided my work as Chair of the Education Committee. One of our most important current initiatives is a national survey sent to training centers to understand how we can better promote NAEMT educator courses. This effort came from listening, truly listening, to our instructors and coordinators. We asked, “What’s getting in your way?” and “How can we help?” Now we’re using those answers to shape our outreach and support.
- The same values guided our beginning phase of the new membership and education portal. It was designed not just to modernize access but to reflect real, user-driven feedback. We didn’t build it to be flashy, we built it to be useful.
- My leadership style has also shaped my contributions at the national level. I was fortunate to participate in NAEMT’s recent strategic planning sessions, where we helped set the course for the next five years. We worked together to craft a renewed mission and vision for the association, one that reflects where EMS is going, not just where it’s been. Being part of that conversation was a reminder that strategy and service go hand in hand.
- Ultimately, leadership in EMS requires more than a title. It requires listening, showing up, doing the work, and staying focused on the people and patients at the center of everything we do. That’s the style I bring and the standard I hold myself to every day.

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 don't think there's a single person who has worked in EMS for more than a couple of days who doesn't believe it's an essential service. Whether it's the individual calling 911, the municipality managing resources, the state coordinating response, or the federal government planning for public health and disaster preparedness; EMS is essential. The question is no longer whether EMS matters. The question is whether we have the national recognition and resources to support the work we're already doing.
- Advocacy is embedded in everything I do, from classroom instruction to strategic planning at the national level. I serve as Chair of the NAEMT Education Committee, where we shape course content and policy that reflects the evolving needs of the EMS workforce. I also serve as an author for AMLS and EMS Safety, using curriculum to highlight the clinical, operational, and systemic challenges EMS professionals face, and how we can address them through critical thinking and continued development.
- I have also been honored to participate in NAEMT's strategic planning sessions that laid the foundation for our next five years. That process included defining a renewed mission and vision that elevate EMS as an integrated, respected, and sustainable part of the healthcare system. The work we've done together in those sessions is advocacy at its core, setting direction with intention and urgency.
- I've also had the privilege of participating in EMS on the Hill Day, where I met directly with legislators and congressional staff to advocate for EMS funding, rural system support, and federal recognition. Drawing on my own background in rural EMS, I was able to speak to the unique challenges faced by providers and patients in small and underserved communities. These conversations were not abstract. They were grounded in real-world experience and helped connect national policy to the everyday work of EMS professionals.
- If re-elected, I believe NAEMT can further strengthen its advocacy by:
 - * Continuing to position education as a foundation for professional recognition and mobility
 - * Deepening partnerships with national organizations like the National Registry of EMTs (NREMT), National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP), American Ambulance Association (AAA), and state associations to create unified messaging and shared goals
 - * Leveraging member feedback and workforce data to drive evidence-based legislative priorities
 - * Supporting state-level efforts through member toolkits and policy education
 - * Expanding visibility in healthcare, public safety, and public health coalitions to ensure EMS is part of every major policy discussion
- NAEMT has the influence, the infrastructure, and the talent to lead the charge. We need to keep showing up, keep aligning our message, and keep investing in the people doing the work. That is how we turn belief into recognition, and recognition into action.

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?

- I consider myself part of the next generation of EMS leadership, and I take that responsibility seriously. I've been shaped by mentors who built the profession we all

stand on today, and I see it as my role to continue that legacy while helping to educate and empower the future of EMS.

- As the Director of the Falck Health Institute and a national EMS educator, I work with hundreds of EMT students and emerging professionals every year. Many are entering EMS for the first time, some as a stepping stone, others as a calling. Either way, they are looking for direction, connection, and meaning. That is where NAEMT can make the biggest impact, by being more than an association. We must be a community with a clear sense of purpose.
- I believe NAEMT can better support and develop the EMS workforce by focusing on three key areas:
 - Create a sense of belonging early. Many new providers do not see themselves as “association people” because no one has shown them what membership can mean. If we want them to join, we need to first invite them in, personally, intentionally, and with purpose. When I talk to students about NAEMT, I do not start with discounts or benefits. I talk about the mission. I talk about professional identity. I invite them into something bigger than a patch or a paycheck.
 - Invest in clear career pathways. Today’s workforce wants to know what comes next. Whether they stay in EMS for five years or twenty, they want opportunities to grow. NAEMT can play a stronger role in mapping those trajectories by connecting education, certification, and leadership development into a coherent path forward.
 - Meet them where they are. Younger generations expect digital access, flexible learning, and platforms that work. NAEMT’s new membership and education portal is a huge step in the right direction, and I’m proud to have helped in its initial phase of development. But we need to keep innovating by expanding micro-learning, recognizing alternative credentials, and building mentorship opportunities that are inclusive and accessible.
- As for how we communicate the value of membership, I believe it must be rooted in shared purpose. According to research by the American Society of Association Executives, the top reasons people join professional organizations are networking, education, and mission alignment. We need to speak clearly about why NAEMT exists and who it is here to serve.
- When we center that purpose, when we make people feel seen, heard, and needed, we do not just grow our membership. We grow the profession.

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

- One of the most pressing issues facing EMS today is the mental health and overall well-being of our workforce. Across the country, EMTs and paramedics are experiencing record levels of stress, burnout, moral injury, and personal strain. Long shifts, low pay, critical staffing shortages, and repeated exposure to trauma are taking a cumulative toll. Behind the statistics are real people who are exhausted, overlooked, and too often unsupported.
- In recent years, our profession has made progress in recognizing the mental health needs of EMS clinicians. But awareness alone is not enough. We need structural support. We need access to care. And we need national leadership that treats EMS mental health as a core priority.

- At the same time, we cannot talk about workforce wellness without addressing the larger issue of how EMS is funded and recognized. EMS is still not considered an essential service at the federal level. This leaves providers vulnerable, agencies underfunded, and our systems perpetually under strain. It also sends the wrong message to the people doing the work. If we want providers to stay in this profession, we need to treat it as the critical public service it is.
- NAEMT has a unique opportunity to lead on both fronts.
- First, NAEMT should continue to expand mental health and wellness initiatives, building on programs like the Mental Health Resilience Officer course and the EMS Safety course. We should continue to partner with national behavioral health organizations to offer more resources tailored to first responders and create a culture where asking for help is seen as a strength, not a liability.
- Second, we must advocate for EMS to be federally recognized as an essential service. This designation is more than symbolic, it is a funding mechanism. When EMS is funded appropriately, agencies are better positioned to invest in their people through wages, benefits, training, and wellness programs. Reimbursement should reflect the true cost of care, not just transport. The return on that investment is a healthier, more stable, and more resilient workforce.
- Finally, NAEMT should push for policy and funding that enables reinvestment in our people. That includes funding for peer support teams, paid time for mental health recovery, onboarding programs that prioritize psychological safety, and leadership training focused on creating healthy work environments. We should also collect and publish data that links provider wellness to clinical outcomes, workforce retention, and public safety.
- Our workforce is the backbone of EMS. If we do not take care of them, the rest does not matter. I believe NAEMT can and should be the voice that says, loudly and without hesitation: this work is essential, these providers are essential, and their health and well-being must be treated as such.