



2025 Board Election: Candidate Q&A

Candidate Name: John R. Zartman, MSML, NRP/PI.

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

- My leadership style is best described as collaborative, mission-driven, and transformational. I believe in leading by example, empowering others, and fostering a culture of accountability, growth, and respect. In EMS, where teamwork, trust, and rapid decision-making are vital, this approach has helped me build high-performing teams and improve patient care outcomes.
- Collaboration is at the core of how I lead. I actively seek input from diverse perspectives—whether it's frontline providers, educators, or administrators—because I believe that the best solutions often come from those closest to the challenges. This inclusive mindset has enabled me to drive change that is both innovative and practical, earning buy-in from stakeholders across all levels of EMS.
- I also consider myself a mission-driven leader. I remain focused on the broader goals of EMS: improving patient outcomes, supporting our providers, and advancing our profession. In every leadership role I've held, I've worked to align team efforts with these values, whether through quality improvement initiatives, advocacy efforts, or educational advancements.
- Transformational leadership has played a significant role in my journey. I prioritize mentoring and developing others, helping team members grow into leadership roles themselves. By investing in people, I've seen firsthand how empowered individuals can elevate an entire system. Whether it's mentoring new medics or leading system-wide projects, I aim to inspire a shared vision and equip others to achieve it.
- This leadership style has shaped my EMS career in meaningful ways—from managing teams in high-pressure environments to driving regional initiatives that improved operational efficiency and provider well-being. It has allowed me to successfully navigate the complexities of EMS systems while always keeping patient care and provider support at the forefront.
- As a potential NAEMT Regional Director, I would bring this same approach—listening first, collaborating broadly, and leading with purpose—to strengthen our profession and represent our members with integrity and passion.

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?

- Advocacy has been a central part of my commitment to EMS throughout my career. I have advocated for our profession by engaging with local and state policymakers, participating in legislative initiatives, and educating the public and elected officials about the critical role EMS plays in public health and safety. Whether it's fighting for improved

funding, provider safety, mental health resources, or recognition of EMS as an essential service, I believe that advocacy must be both persistent and strategic.

- I've participated in EMS Day at the Capitol events, contributed to state legislative testimony, and collaborated with regional stakeholders to build coalitions that amplify our voice. At the community level, I've worked to promote EMS awareness through public outreach and partnerships with healthcare and emergency management agencies. I also encourage colleagues and future leaders to become involved in advocacy-because lasting change requires widespread engagement.
- NAEMT has done some amazing work over the last few years, yet we need to further strengthen NAEMT's advocacy efforts and help EMS gain the recognition it deserves as an essential service. I recommend a few key strategies:
 - Expand Grassroots Mobilization: Encourage and equip more frontline providers to engage in advocacy. NAEMT can continue to offer training, toolkits, and support for EMS professionals to connect with their legislators and share their stories. Additionally, "Personal" experiences have a powerful impact on policymakers.
 - Strengthen Strategic Partnerships: Build stronger alliances with hospitals, fire service organizations, law enforcement, and public health agencies to present a unified message. Collaborating on joint advocacy goals-such as workforce sustainability or disaster preparedness-can increase our influence.
 - Leverage Data and Storytelling: Combine compelling data with real-world stories to show the value and challenges of EMS. This dual approach resonates with both decision-makers and the public. NAEMT can continue investing in research and case studies that support our legislative priorities.
 - Push for Federal Recognition: Continue advocating for EMS to be designated as an essential service at the federal level, which would open the door to more stable funding, disaster relief inclusion, and national workforce protections. This remains a foundational goal.
 - Elevate Public Awareness: Launch or support national campaigns that educate the public about the life-saving work EMS does every day, including our role in opioid response, mental health, disaster response, and underserved communities.
- As Regional Director, I would use my experience and relationships to advance these strategies and support NAEMT's mission to ensure EMS is properly recognized, funded, and empowered to serve our communities effectively.

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?

- Supporting and developing the EMS workforce especially the next generation is critical to the future of our profession. NAEMT is uniquely positioned to lead in this area by expanding its role as both an advocate and a resource hub for EMS professionals at every stage of their careers.
- To better support the workforce, NAEMT can:
 - Expand Professional Development Opportunities: Continue to grow high-quality, accessible education and leadership development programs. Offering more online, on-demand content and mentorship opportunities can meet younger providers where they are both in their schedules and career paths.

- Enhance Career Pathway Visibility: Many entering the field are unaware of the diverse career opportunities within EMS. NAEMT can help map out clear, progressive career pathways from field provider to educator, administrator, or policy leader and advocate for professional recognition and upward mobility.
- Address Workforce Wellness and Retention: The next generation values mental health support, work-life balance, and meaningful recognition. NAEMT can lead national efforts to improve provider wellness, support peer programs, and reduce burnout, while also pushing for policies that ensure fair compensation and safe working conditions.
- Strengthen Recruitment through Outreach: We need to consider partnering with high schools, technical programs, and universities to raise more awareness about EMS careers and promote the profession as a vital, respected part of the healthcare system.
- To convey the strong value of NAEMT membership, both to current and future members, I focus on three pillars: advocacy, education, and community.
 - Advocacy: NAEMT gives members a national voice. From legislative action to policy development, being part of NAEMT means contributing to efforts that protect and advance our profession. I emphasize that when we speak collectively, we are far more powerful.
 - Education: NAEMT offers some of the most respected continuing education and certification programs in EMS. I highlight how membership opens doors to cutting-edge training that directly improves patient care and supports career advancement.
 - Community and Connection: One of the most valuable aspects of membership is the connection to a network of passionate, like-minded professionals across the country. NAEMT provides a platform to share ideas, mentor others, and be part of something larger than yourself.
- To reach newer generations, NAEMT should also continue evolving its digital engagement using social media, podcasts, and virtual events to stay connected and relevant.
- As Regional Director, I would work to ensure that NAEMT remains responsive to the changing needs of our workforce, and I would serve as a bridge between experienced providers and emerging professionals ensuring both groups see the value, purpose, and pride in being part of our national association.

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 workforce retention and sustainability. Across the country, agencies are experiencing unprecedented staffing shortages, with many providers leaving the profession due to burnout, low wages, limited career advancement, and lack of recognition. This trend poses a serious threat to the stability and effectiveness of our EMS systems, especially in rural and underserved areas.
- I believe that NAEMT can play a critical role in addressing this challenge on multiple fronts:
 - National Advocacy for EMS as an Essential Service: At the core of the workforce crisis is the reality that EMS is not recognized as an essential service in many states. This limits funding, policy support, and long-term investment in the profession. NAEMT must continue leading efforts to secure essential service

designation at the federal level, which would open doors to consistent funding and workforce protections.

- Promoting Provider Well-Being: NAEMT can expand its efforts to support mental health and resilience programs tailored to EMS. This includes advocating for grant funding, developing peer support initiatives, and encouraging agencies to adopt policies that reduce burnout and support work-life balance.
 - Career Pathway Development: Many providers leave EMS because they don't see a future within the field. NAEMT can collaborate with educational institutions and state agencies to promote defined career ladders, leadership development, and continuing education that give providers a clear path forward.
 - Fair Compensation and Incentives: While NAEMT doesn't control wages directly, it can help influence funding structures and policy discussions. By advocating for improved Medicare/Medicaid reimbursement models that reflect the full scope of EMS work including treatment-in-place and community paramedicine NAEMT can help create financial capacity for agencies to offer better compensation and incentives.
 - Elevating the Profession's Image: NAEMT can also help shift public and policymaker perception of EMS from "ambulance drivers" to highly trained, frontline healthcare professionals. Through storytelling, public awareness campaigns, and media engagement, NAEMT can elevate the status of EMS and help communities and legislators understand the critical role we play.
- As Regional Director, I would bring these issues to the forefront, ensuring the voices of EMS professionals in my region are heard and reflected in national priorities. I would work to connect local challenges with national solutions amplifying what works and pushing for the support our workforce needs to thrive.