

Meet Anna Massefski, Individual NEMSQA Member, and EMS Explorer Program Coordinator at Maine EMS!



Anna Massefski, EMT, MPH, has been in the field of EMS for 5 years, and in her current role is working to create a state-wide program giving young people the opportunity to explore EMS. Anna is driven by the desire to give field providers a voice, and the ability to drive changes to improve the EMS system. She believes change needs to start at the foundation, saying, “If you're going to address something at a systemic level to eliminate a problem, you have to start at the root.”

How did you end up working in EMS?

I didn't intend to become an EMT. It was kind of an evolution that started one day when I was walking to my college cafeteria. A fellow student fell in front of me and whacked her head on the ground. When the campus EMTs arrived, they took care of everything. I wanted to be able to do that so that if another person had an emergency near me, I could help. So, next semester I enrolled in the EMT class. I still finished my writing and film degree, but after I graduated, I got a job with an ambulance company. I quickly saw the opportunities to improve the system, so a couple of years and a pandemic later I went back to grad school for public health.

If you could change one thing about EMS, what would it be?

Sustainability of the EMS system. It's important to me that the providers coming into EMS have a better experience than I did. When I started, my colleagues told me that new people hardly last 2 weeks. I don't want EMS to be the kind of field that takes these passionate people eager to help their communities, and spits them out 2 weeks later, running for the hills. I want people coming in to have support, and to have a voice and the ability to drive change. There is often a disconnect between the people that are doing patient care and experiencing the day-to-day life of EMS, and the people that make the decisions that shape that life. It could start with initial education emphasizing that the most important thing is the people around you. An issue for one person is an issue for everybody. It doesn't matter if you always get off your shift on time, if your colleague is being held late 3 hours every single day, that's a problem and we're going to stand together and try to fix that. I think it will trickle up if new providers come in empowered to advocate for themselves and their partners.

How did you find out about NEMSQA and why did you become a member?

After I graduated with my MPH, I was networking like crazy. I cold-emailed Dia Gainor at NASEMSO just to say, “I'm an EMT, and I'm really interested in the sustainability of the EMS system and making things better. Would you be willing to talk to me?” Dia wrote me back that same day and we had a Zoom meeting. She connected me with NEMSQA and I started working with NEMSQA doing these member spotlights. I met and talked to so many amazing people, and I wanted to continue that. I also believe in the work that the organization is doing. I think EMS needs a unified voice and the ability to advocate effectively for itself. Having national quality standards lets us prove that we're doing a good job—that gives us more sway. Being able to look at the care we provide and evaluate its efficiency, effectiveness, and safety—that's really important if we're going to interface with payers and regulators.

What is something you are particularly proud of?

My MPH capstone project, Preventing Ambulance Crashes in Massachusetts, won second place in the 2022 NASEMSO Abstract Contest. I flew down to South Carolina and presented it at the NASEMO Annual Meeting, and to the Highway Incident and Transportation Systems Committee.

What do you like to do outside of work?

When I moved to Maine 3 months ago, I joined a Dungeons and Dragons group run through a game store. It's been a really fun experience and it's enabled me to meet people outside of work.