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It is estimated that over 20 million individuals annually fall victim to human traffickers around the globe. Many of these victims are right here in Ohio and are often the most innocent members of society – children. Human trafficking is a horrific crime in which perpetrators reduce their victims to modern day slaves in various forms of sex and/or labor exploitation. Therefore, we are asking your hospital to develop a human trafficking protocol to educate your healthcare professionals about the reality of human trafficking to prevent future victims and to identify current ones.

Healthcare professionals are one of the few groups who regularly encounter victims while they are being trafficked. A recent study of survivors of sex trafficking found that approximately 88% had been seen by a healthcare practitioner while they were being trafficked, but tragically were not identified as victims. This was due to multiple factors, the most important being lack of awareness and education on the part of healthcare professionals. Given the complex physical and emotional trauma that victims suffer, human trafficking is a major public health issue.

One of the most effective steps that medical institutions can take to properly identify and assist human trafficking victims is to develop a specialized response protocol. Many protocols for healthcare organizations have been developed and can be found online. For example, one specific healthcare protocol can be found at <https://healtrafficking.org/> under the Resources tab.

In fact, Cleveland area health systems have worked with the Collaborative to End Human Trafficking to develop suggested guidelines and produce a training video and resource manual addressing healthcare's response to treating suspected victims. These resources are available by contacting the Collaborative at collabtoendht@gmail.com.

The State Medical Board of Ohio also has created two videos which encourage healthcare institutions to develop and adopt a human trafficking protocol and to train their medical professionals on how to identify and treat human trafficking victims. The videos are titled "Human Trafficking Awareness – Sex Trafficking Video" and "Human Trafficking Awareness – Labor Trafficking Video." Both can be viewed at www.med.ohio.gov under the Resources tab.

Criminals who abuse and manipulate their victims operate in the dark, hoping to never be exposed for who they really are. However, as we continue to educate and empower Ohioans to

learn about human trafficking, we can bring these criminals into the light and hold them accountable for their actions.

We encourage you to join in our efforts to protect Ohio families by helping end the abuse of human trafficking. If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Gillcrist, Managing Attorney, Office of Ohio Attorney General, at 216-787-5995.

Very respectfully yours,



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