

Michigan Human Trafficking Health Advisory Board

2018 Annual Report



RICK SNYDER, GOVERNOR | NICK LYON, DIRECTOR

Pursuant to the Human Trafficking Health Advisory Board Act, MCL 752.991 et seq., the members of the Michigan Human Trafficking Health Advisory Board developed this annual report to detail the board's activities and recommendations for improving health and mental health services for victims of human trafficking. The report is submitted to the chairs of the committees concerned with health policy of the Michigan Senate and House of Representatives.

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Message from the Chair

Honorable Lawmakers,

I am proud to share the attached 2018 annual report for the MI Human Trafficking Health Advisory Board. This report outlines the board's activities throughout the past year.

Human trafficking is an emerging field in healthcare, and our board members are working hard to stay up to date on the latest developments in this field.

In addition, many of our board members are diligently working to raise awareness of human trafficking and the needs of survivors among members of the healthcare community.

Many thanks to MDHHS for continuing to be a valuable partner, resource, and ally in proactively addressing concerns raised by board members. The board is also deeply grateful to other organizations (listed in the report) for their assistance in fulfilling its mission.

Finally, thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as chairperson of this extraordinary board.

Respectfully,



Jayashree (Jay) Kommareddi, Chairperson
MI Human Trafficking Health Advisory Board

Board Members

Chairperson Jayashree Kommareddi, of Grand Blanc, represents individuals with experience and expertise in the fields of human trafficking prevention and intervention.

Vice Chairperson Matt Lori, of Lansing, is senior deputy director of the Policy, Planning, and Legislative Services Administration at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Mr. Lori serves as a designated representative from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Lori Ryland, Ph. D., of Battle Creek, represents mental health professionals.

Sheila Meshinski, R.N., of Macomb, represents registered professional nurses with experience in an emergency department, emergency room, or trauma center of a hospital.

James Blessman, M.D., of Detroit, represents individuals licensed to practice medicine and was recommended by the Speaker of the House.

Brigette Robarge, of Belleville, represents human trafficking survivors.

Ruth Rondon, of Wyoming, represents human trafficking survivors.

Subburaman Sivakumar, M.D., of Northville Township, represents individuals licensed to practice medicine and was recommended by the Senate Majority Leader.

Herman McCall, Ed.D., of Albion, is executive director of the Children's Services Agency at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. McCall serves as a designated representative from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Contents

Executive Summary 5

Introduction 6

Background..... 8

2018 Board Activities 9

Conclusion 12

Acknowledgements..... 13

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Executive Summary

Human trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining of a person for compelled labor or commercial sex acts through the use of force, fraud, or coercion, or if the individual induced to perform a commercial sex act is under 18 years old. Human trafficking is a serious public health issue, and the healthcare community can play an integral role in confronting it.

In October 2014, Governor Rick Snyder signed the Human Trafficking Health Advisory Board Act into law. The act established the Michigan Human Trafficking Health Advisory Board, a public advisory body housed in the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and comprised of health and mental health professionals, human trafficking prevention experts, government agency representatives, and survivors of human trafficking. The Michigan Human Trafficking Health Advisory Board's mission is to improve the quality of and access to health and mental health services for victims of human trafficking.

This is the Board's third annual report submitted to the legislature. The report includes a summary of activities by the board in 2018.

2018 Activities:

1. Finished the Human Trafficking Hospital and Emergency Room Protocol Pilot
2. Continued supporting the department's grant to the Human Trafficking Law Clinic at the University of Michigan to assist survivors of human trafficking with immigration medical exam costs
3. Established a partnership with the Measurable Change Initiative
4. Started a statewide listening tour of local service providers for survivors of human trafficking
5. Partnered with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to establish a Human Trafficking Coordinator position within the Division of Victim Services
6. Partnered with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to improve services for survivors of human trafficking and their families

Introduction

In 2014, a 21-bill legislative package overhauling the human trafficking chapter in Michigan's laws was signed into law by Governor Rick Snyder in 2014. One of these bills, Public Act 461 of 2014, established the Michigan Human Trafficking Health Advisory Board within the (now) Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

The Human Trafficking Health Advisory board is comprised of nine members including representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services, medical professionals, mental health professionals, human trafficking survivors, and human trafficking prevention and intervention experts.

Public Act 461 of 2014 charges the Board with five essential duties:

1. Collect and analyze information about available health services for trafficking survivors;
2. Identify government agencies that are involved with issues related to human trafficking and coordinate the dissemination of information about health services to trafficking survivors;
3. Meet with local health agencies to review health services and establish a program to make survivors more aware of available services;
4. Establish a program to improve public awareness about available health services for survivors; and
5. Review existing state laws and administrative rules relating to health services for survivors.

Over the past year, the board met four times:

- **January 31, 2018**
- **May 10, 2018**
- **September 6, 2018**
- **November 29, 2018**

Several guest speakers gave presentations at board meetings:

- **Kathy Wahl and Terrie Godde** from MDHHS presented on the Division of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) within the department and current efforts to educate EMS providers about human trafficking.
- **James McCurtis** from MDHHS presented on the Division of Victim Services within the department.
- **Kathy Maitland** from the Michigan Abolitionist Project presented to the board about her work on victim services with the Human Trafficking Commission and Joint Anti-Trafficking Task Force (JATT) in southeastern Michigan.
- **Susan Tippett** and **Michelle Most** from Genesys Health Foundation presented on the hospital and emergency room human trafficking protocol pilot.
- **Andy Soper** from Measurable Change, LLC. Presented to the board about the Measurable Change initiative

- **Claudnyse Jenkins** from Voices for Children Advocacy Center presented to the board about the center and the services it provides.
- **Aleksa Andjelkovic** from MDHHS presented on the new Human Trafficking Coordinator position in the Division of Victim Services within the department.

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Background

The issue of human trafficking has received increased attention by the public in recent years. While the number of human trafficking cases in the United States remains unclear, we know that people are being trafficked in communities—large and small, affluent and poor, rural and urban—across the country. Members of our communities are being exploited at the hands of profiteers and robbed of their most fundamental right—freedom. Michigan is no exception to this crime.

Human trafficking is no longer viewed as solely a law enforcement issue. Rather, experts on human trafficking now recognize that healthcare professionals can play an important role in both identifying and assisting victims of trafficking. Studies have shown that a majority of human trafficking victims report seeing a healthcare professional at some point while being trafficked. Unfortunately, many healthcare professionals lack the training to identify victims. We must change this. Every day healthcare professionals have an opportunity to empower victims to leave their traffickers, and we should give them every possible resource to do this.

However, the healthcare professional's role does not end once a victim has been identified. Viewing human trafficking from a health lens necessitates addressing the physical and behavioral health consequences of human trafficking. The needs of trafficking victims are complex, and the factors affecting physical, mental, and emotional health are often interrelated. To properly address these complex needs, healthcare professionals must collaborate with other resources and providers in their communities. The Human Trafficking Health Advisory Board recognizes this need for cooperation and the Board has made a conscious effort to partner with other government agencies, community non-profits, healthcare organizations, and, most importantly, survivors of human trafficking. No one person, provider, or organization can address all of the needs of trafficking victims, but through education, training, and coordination we can develop a network of services for survivors that can empower victims and survivors to live healthy, independent lives.

2018 Board Activities

Over the past twelve months members of the Human Trafficking Health Advisory Board have been hard at work on a number of projects. Some of the board's work was a continuation of projects from 2017 while other projects were new and made possible by the helpful input and hard work of members. Below is a brief overview of board activities from 2018.

✓ Partnered with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to establish a Human Trafficking Coordinator position within the Division of Victim Services

Based on a recommendation from board members, MDHHS established a Human Trafficking Coordinator position within the Division of Victim Services in May of 2018. This position was created to increase awareness of the issue of human trafficking within the department and find opportunities to improve the department's efforts related to human trafficking. Prior to this position being created, the board identified that MDHHS is a large organization with a number of different services and programs that interact with survivors of human trafficking, but it lacked a dedicated position within the department who could help coordinate these efforts.

Since the position was created, the coordinator has held trainings for MDHHS staff, presented at conferences, and worked closely with areas of the department like Children's Services to improve the services they offer to survivors of human trafficking. The department plans to continue funding this position in 2019.

✓ Finished the Human Trafficking Hospital and Emergency Room Protocol Pilot

In fall 2018, Genesys Health Foundation concluded its two-year grant from MDHHS to pilot the development and implementation of a human trafficking protocol for their hospital and emergency department. The grant—originally awarded in 2016 and renewed for a second year in 2017—was based on a recommendation from the Human Trafficking Health Advisory Board in 2015 that hospitals and emergency departments should develop a standardized human trafficking protocol.

According to the board's original recommendation, the protocol should include several key components: warning signs of human trafficking and questions to ask if the professional suspects human trafficking, treatment guidelines for victims of human trafficking, reporting and safety procedures for Child Protective Services or law enforcement, and resources to provide the individual if an adult does not want to report to law enforcement.

While the first year of the pilot focused on developing the protocol and training providers, the second year of the pilot focused on implementation, data collection, and evaluation of the

protocol in several locations across Michigan. Representatives from Genesys Health Foundation presented at two board meetings in 2018 to give an update on the pilot. In early 2019, Genesys Health Foundation will submit a report to MDHHS detailing their experience developing and implementing this protocol over the past years. The report will include recommendations and “best practices” for other hospitals who are interested in implementing a similar protocol.

✓ **Continued supporting the department’s grant to the Human Trafficking Law Clinic at the University of Michigan to assist survivors of human trafficking with immigration medical exam costs**

Based on a recommendation from the board, MDHHS continued its partnership with the Human Trafficking Law Clinic at the University of Michigan to help cover the costs of immigration medical exams for survivors of human trafficking.

Board members originally worked with the department in 2017 to create a grant to help survivors and their families with covering the costs of these exams. These exams are necessary for individuals to apply for legal permanent residence, but the board learned through its work with the Human Trafficking Law Clinic that the costs of these exams can often be prohibitive for survivors and their families.

The grant is administered by MDHHS and provides funds to the Human Trafficking Law Clinic to help clients who cannot afford the exams. In 2018, MDHHS decided to renew the grant for fiscal year 2019. The board looks forward to continuing to partner with MDHHS and the Human Trafficking Law Clinic in 2019 to improve access to services for non-citizen survivors of trafficking.

✓ **Established a partnership with the Measurable Change Initiative**

The board agreed to support the Measurable Change Initiative. On September 6, 2018, Andy Soper and Marc Berry (Measurable Change, LLC) in partnership with their colleague Kris McNeil (THINK BLACK, Inc.) presented their initiative and asked for the board’s support. The initiative will conduct a statewide baseline assessment of victim services, develop a standardized, cross industry data collection protocol, and create a roadmap to align systemic efforts across the state to combat human trafficking. Members of the board agreed to draft a letter of support for the initiative that states the board supports the mission of the project and is willing to assist Andy Soper in pursuing future funding opportunities.

✓ **Partnered with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to improve services for survivors of human trafficking and their families**

Members of the board partnered with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to change the program's policies around providing identification documents so the program can better serve survivors and their families.

WIC is a program administered by MDHHS that provides supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income, pregnant women and families with young children. As part of the program's enrollment process, individuals must provide documentation to verify information like income, residence, and identity. However, these requirements present a barrier for some survivors who may not be in possession of their documents. Withholding documents such as passports or visas is a tactic sometimes used by traffickers to exercise control over survivors—especially survivors who are not U.S. nationals. Because of this, members of the board are working with leadership from Michigan's WIC program to help create policies to better serve survivors in their clinics.

✓ **Started a listening tour of local service providers**

Board members decided to invite service providers who work with survivors of human trafficking to present at board meetings. Members wanted to learn both about the services being provided to survivors and challenges organizations face in this field. The board hopes that giving organizations an opportunity to share their experiences will better inform areas of focus for the board's work and create opportunities for the board to strengthen its support of providers. The first presentation to the board was from the Voices for Children Advocacy Center in Flint at the November 29, 2018 meeting. The board plans to invite additional organizations to present at future meetings.

Conclusion

The Board's activities described in this report represent one piece of the much larger picture of confronting human trafficking in Michigan. Healthcare professionals play a vital role in identifying and supporting victims/survivors of human trafficking. The mental, physical, and emotional consequences of human trafficking on victims/survivors are complex and creating victim-centered, trauma-informed services that effectively meets their needs requires collaboration and coordination across disciplines. To this end, much of the work in this report would not be possible without the essential input and cooperation of the board's partners throughout Michigan.

This report builds on best practices from across the country to ensure the board is implementing evidence-based, collaborative approaches to serving victims of human trafficking. The board believes that through the work described in this report, healthcare professionals will have the opportunity to achieve their field's highest aim: empowering some of our society's most vulnerable individuals to lead healthy, thriving lives.

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Acknowledgements

The Human Trafficking Health Advisory Board would like to thank the following organizations for their partnership in 2018:

- Division of Victim Services, MDHHS
- Division of Emergency Medical Services (EMS), MDHHS
- Genesys Health Foundation
- Measurable Change, LLC.
- Michigan Abolitionist Project
- Michigan Human Trafficking Commission
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), MDHHS
- University of Michigan Law School Human Trafficking Clinic
- Voices for Children Advocacy Center

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