

Meeting Minutes – Human Trafficking Health Adv. Board

Location: South Grand Building, Grand Conference Room, 333 S. Grand Ave., Lansing, MI

Date: December 5, 2019

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Attendance

Present:

- Debi Cain
- Stacy Doctoroff
- Ruth Rondon
- Dr. James Blessman
- Brigette Robarge
- Jay Kommareddi (Chair)
- Sheila Meshinski (via phone)

Absent:

- Dr. Subburaman Sivakumar
- Jon Breems

Scribe: Aleksa Andjelkovic, DHHS DVS staff

Agenda

I. Call to Order

- Meeting called to order at 10:04 a.m.

II. Roll Call

III. Adoption of Meeting Minutes from September 12, 2019

- Motion to approve by Ruth Rondon, second by Debi Cain. Minutes approved unanimously with no changes.

IV. Membership Update

- Due to scheduling change, JooYeun Chang, MDHHS Children's Services director, was not able to join, as it was previously planned.
- Brigette Robarge, has been reappointed for another four-year term to expire in 2023.
- Debi Cain was nominated at a vice chair to the board.
 - Motion by Ruth Rondon to approve; second by Dr. James Blessman. Motion approved.

V. Updates from Past Meetings

- No update on this item--Jon gave an update about the human trafficking emergency room protocol pilot and efforts to spread the work to other hospitals. Sue Tippet from Genesys spoke with Jon and Jay and provided information about efforts within the Ascension health

system in Michigan to adopt human trafficking protocols. The lessons learned materials that were developed by Genesys will be updated this fall based on recent efforts.

- No update on this item--Members discussed the role of multidisciplinary teams in the human trafficking protocol pilot, and Debi said she would look into potential for collaboration with other multidisciplinary teams for issues like domestic violence and sexual assault. In addition, Sue is connecting Aleksa Andjelkovic with the Michigan College of Emergency Physicians who are interested in human trafficking materials for their members.
- Follow up item: Work in progress--: Debi Cain and Aleksa Andjelkovic will examine if there are opportunities for collaboration between human trafficking multidisciplinary teams and other related teams for domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Follow up item completed: Jon sent information to board members about a program in New York for connecting survivors with public benefits that was mentioned during the Kalamazoo YWCA's presentation at a previous meeting.

VI. Update from Aleksa Andjelkovic, MDHHS Human Trafficking Coordinator

- Aleksa Andjelkovic provided an update to the board about her work as the MDHHS Human Trafficking Coordinator. She also provided an update about: the Human Trafficking Commission in the Attorney General's office; impressions from the Juvenile Sex Trafficking conference in October 2019; and, events surrounding de-criminalization efforts in DC during the same month. The bill 318 was introduced by D.C. council member David Grosso but opposed by the council.

VII. Update from Brigitte Robarge, board member

- Brigitte Robarge provided an update to the board about her recent work including organizing a survivors' council. She also gave her perspective on the bill 318 as she went with a group of survivors to protest the bill and reported that this group of survivors had a chance to meet with D.C. council member David Grosso to express their opposition to the bill. She reported that survivors support partial decriminalization and that another seven states are considering similar bills such as NY, MA, CA, NH, RI. Brigitte reported that pro-sex movements are pushing for the bill while most people do not understand basis of Human Trafficking. She mentioned unprotected communities such as LGBTQ population and others that can also be inadvertently negatively impacted by potential full decriminalization.
- Survivors council: slow progress. First informal group in January. Brigitte investigated forming it as a formal council and will continue working on it.
- Brigitte is co-founder of recently established "What About Us" organization providing support for survivors.
- Follow up item: Brigitte proposed to start meeting with sex workers for reeducation about Human Trafficking. Ruth commented that at some point during her trafficking experience she too actually felt empowered while doing sex work, but that feeling eventually shifted.
- Follow up item: Brigitte Robarge will get to the board more information about MA Congress's full decriminalization bill.

VIII. Update from Ruth Rondon, board member

- Ruth spoke at some conferences including HIV/STD where some sex works were in attendance and giving presentation as well. They did attend Ruth's session as first with few of them walking out, but Ruth did not attend theirs.

IX. Presentation from Meredith Reese of Vista Maria, part two to the presentation on 9/19.

- Meredith Reese, Chief Integrated Behavioral Health Officer of Vista Maria, gave a presentation about Vista Maria's current 16-bed programs for female survivors of trafficking and a newly developed wing housing 16-bed Stabilization Treatment Housing (16 beds) and Emergency Intake Wing (3 beds). The board was invited to Vista Maria for a site visit in April 2020, when new wing is opened.

X. Questions/Comments from members

- A prolific discussion amongst board members ensued in attempts to think through intricate issues that were brought up thought decriminalization updates. One of ideas was to look for natural alliances within fields of sexual assault, Child Advocacy Centers, Battered Women, LGBTQ, Child abuse, Domestic Violence who have lobbies in DC and might be able to assist. It was proposed further leaning about Nordic model. Some additional point that were brought up during the discussion amongst members:
- Ruth raised questions about vetting process for the members of the survivor council and the need to have diverse demographic representation of survivors including those who experienced labor trafficking.
- Debi shared lessons learned from DV/SA fields that no two survivors nor their experiences are the same as well that legislation on topic issues tend to swing back and forth and sometimes can have unintended consequences.

XI. Public Comment

XII. Upcoming Events

- Next board meeting is on March 26, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Jay Kommareddi proposed that the next board meeting location could take place at Vista Maria along with the site visit, which will be determined at later date.
- Sheila Meshinski will be speaking on Human Trafficking, in Canada, in January.
- Ruth Rondon will be speaking at the Capitol in January

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Jay Kommareddi; Second by Dr James Blessman. Meeting adjourned at 11:34 p.m.