

National EMS Advisory Council Committee Reporting Template FINAL

Committee: Preparedness and Education

Title: Human Trafficking Education for EMS Professionals

A. Executive Summary

Definition and Types: Human trafficking is a worldwide problem and one that affects every state and territory in the United States. Commercial sex trafficking and labor trafficking are the two most common types of trafficking. Victims being trafficked in either type are exploited and are kept under submission by the perpetrator through force, fraud, or coercion. Men, women, and children can all be victims of this crime. Human trafficking victims come from all backgrounds, with the most vulnerable populations victimized most often. Human trafficking is different from smuggling operations in that victims do not have to travel or cross state or national borders.

Identifying human trafficking can be the first opportunity to end the victimization. Even if human trafficking is only suspected, reporting to the appropriate authorities may be the first step towards freedom. Although EMS professionals have a duty to report child abuse, not all cases of human trafficking involve minors. All 50 states have mandatory reporting of child abuse and in some cases, this includes adults who are unable to care for themselves. The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974 requiring states to have child abuse reporting laws was amended in 2015, to include language that specifically includes human trafficking and gives the states the option of treating young adults up to age 24 as victims of “child abuse and neglect” or “sexual abuse” (English, 2017). Unfortunately, there are few states who require healthcare providers to report suspected human trafficking of adults, unless injuries can be attributable to domestic violence. This does not in any way obviate the potential for EMS to notify emergency department staff of their suspicion after transporting a patient for evaluation and treatment.

Interventions and opportunities: EMS is a profession with a unique opportunity to identify human trafficking. EMS practitioners educated in various aspects of human trafficking including types, observational signs, and knowledge of trauma informed care, may be able to recognize human trafficking situations, interact with the victims, and potentially improve outcomes. Understanding how victims of human trafficking enter the EMS system would help to provide awareness of situations that may be related to this issue, including personal threats to and protection of the safety and confidentiality of the victims.

Training materials for EMS professionals and 911 call takers/dispatchers are

inconsistent across agencies, from basic overviews to more extensive training. According to Powell et al (2017), many organizations have developed curricula and offered training, although methods and content vary widely and there has been little evaluation on the impact of the training. A central repository of training materials would make it easier for training managers to assist in the education of EMS professionals. Learning management systems used by various agencies could leverage these training materials and provide both initial and updated training to EMS professionals. Including the training into the National Education Standards in both adult and pediatric care affords the opportunity to educate EMS professionals upon entry into their practice. This advisory outlines specific recommendations to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to address the area of human trafficking as it interfaces with the Emergency Medical Services system.

B. Recommended Actions/Strategies:

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Recommendation 1:

The National EMS Advisory Council (NEMSAC) recommends the Federal Interagency Committee on EMS (FICEMS), in collaboration with the DHS Blue Campaign, develop a recommended outline of topics for EMS human trafficking education to include such topics as, but not limited to trauma informed care, indicators of possible human trafficking victims and situations, and requirements or recommendations for notifications to appropriate authorities and have this information available on the Blue Campaign website.

Recommendation 2:

The National EMS Advisory Council (NEMSAC) recommends the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) assemble a group of subject matter experts to provide guidance on training for the developers and publishers of the National Education Standards, who would then include human trafficking victim recognition, identification of potential situations involving human trafficking, and instruct on trauma informed care as part of both adult and pediatric care at all practitioner levels in the next edition.

Recommendation 3:

The National EMS Advisory Council (NEMSAC) recommends the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) engage representatives of 911 centers to develop an educational program for call takers to be able to recognize situations that may involve human trafficking.

Recommendation 4:

The National EMS Advisory Council (NEMSAC) recommends the Federal Interagency Committee on EMS (FICEMS) commission a study of how human trafficking victims present to the 911/EMS/EMSC, law enforcement, and first

responder systems that includes an evaluation of who is activating 911 and provide their findings to DHS for inclusion in the Blue Campaign website's training/educational materials.

Recommendation 5:

The National EMS Advisory Council (NEMSAC) recommends the Federal Interagency Committee on EMS (FICEMS) work collaboratively with the DHS Blue Campaign to broaden the scope of resources available, via the Blue Campaign website, to include human trafficking education and toolbox for EMS professionals.

C. Scope and Definition

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 defines human trafficking as “a) Sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or b) The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provisioning, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.” (22 U.S.C. § 7102(9)) (United States Department of Justice, n.d.).

According to the Polaris Project, reported human trafficking cases in 2018 jumped by 25% over the previous year with 10,949 cases identified. Among this cohort, sex trafficking was the most prevalent type of human trafficking (Polaris, 2018). Human trafficking investigations have been conducted in all 50 states involving a variety of seemingly lawful enterprises which cover for the actual “business” of trafficking (Polaris, 2018).

D. Analysis

“The Department of Homeland Security created the Blue Campaign to unify efforts to combat human trafficking and foster collaboration among government and non-governmental organizations, private companies, law enforcement and EMS” (EMS.gov, 2016). However, two years later, the United States Fire Administration (USFA) noted that less than half of surveyed EMS workers have received human trafficking training (USFA, 2018). They identified a need for education on legal definitions, local awareness, populations at risk, types of trafficking, victimization and control methods, and common trafficking settings.

In 2018, NASEMSO submitted a proposal for a three year project “Empowering EMS Professionals to Engage in Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking.” One of the first project goals was to consolidate information and assemble a group of SMEs to provide guidance of protocol template development and training content. To date, this proposal has not been enacted.

In the Abuse and Maltreatment section of the National Model EMS Clinical Guidelines 2017, a one paragraph of general notes was included to instruct the EMS provider to consider human trafficking of adults and children (NASEMSO, p.49).

E. Strategic Vision

A national workforce of EMS professionals and 911 call takers/dispatchers educated on human trafficking indicators would identify human trafficking situations more often and provide the victims with more opportunities for intervention. The use of trauma informed care and supportive, nonjudgmental attitudes will positively impact the interaction between the patient/victim and EMS professionals and may be the first step in getting the victim away from the perpetrator. The education on human trafficking indicators will increase the EMS professionals' likelihood of reporting abuse stemming from the human trafficking situation.

EMS professionals and 911 call takers/dispatchers should receive education on the subject of human trafficking and having standardized training materials available and located in one place would facilitate this training. Agency and department training managers would have the instructional resources to educate their employees without a need to conduct multiple searches. The training materials could also be included in any learning management systems (LMS) used by the various agencies.

A thorough understanding of how human trafficking victims enter the EMS system will guide the development of the training. A commissioned study by NHTSA would identify data-supported information and describe how EMS is activated in human trafficking situations.

F. Strategic Goals

1. Human trafficking training materials available for EMS personnel on the website at [DHS.gov/Blue-Campaign](https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign) by 2024
2. Development of human trafficking training materials specifically for 911 call takers and dispatchers by 2024.
3. Research to develop a thorough understanding of the entry of human trafficking victims into the 911/EMS system by 2024.

Reference Material:

A. Crosswalk with other standards documents or past recommendations

There are no past NEMSAC recommendations related to this advisory.

B. Sources/references related to the issue

EMS.gov (2016). EMS'S role to end human trafficking. Retrieved from www.ems.gov/newsletter/marapr2016/end-human-trafficking.html

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- National Association of State EMS Officials NASEMSO (2018). Empowering EMS professionals to engage in efforts to combat human trafficking.
- National Emergency Number Association (NENA), July 2017. NENA Protocol for Handling Calls Regarding Human Trafficking Information Document.
- Powell, C., Dickins, K., and Stoklosa, H. (2017). Training U.S. health professionals on human Trafficking: Where do we go from here? Retrieved from *Med Educ Online*. 2017; 22(1): 1267980. Published online 2017 Jan 6. doi: 10.1080/10872981.2017.1267980
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5328372/>
- USFA (2018). Training helps EMS workers identify human trafficking signs. Retrieved from https://www.usfa.fema.gov/current_events/110818.html