Tips for Medical Providers

**Background:** Human sex trafficking, also called modern day slavery, occurs when a controlling individual uses force, fraud, or coercion to exploit a victim for the purpose of personal gain. Anyone under the age of 18 is considered a victim if they engage in commercial sex acts, regardless of trafficker involvement. Force, fraud, or coercion does not have to be present if the victim is a minor.

Only by identifying victims, offering resources, and reporting victims (when able) to the proper authorities can medical providers play their role in preventing future victimization.

**Risk Factors for Human Trafficking Victimization:** While an individual of any age, sex, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status can become a victim, some common risk factors include:

- Young age
- Runaway
- Involvement with foster care services
- Family dysfunction
- Prior history of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse
- Drug/alcohol use
- Poverty
- Lack of social support
- Learning disabilities
- Mental health problems

**Signs that Suggest Human Trafficking Victimization:**

- Clear disclosure from patient
- Delay in seeking medical care
- Signs of physical and/or sexual abuse
- Inconsistent or vague explanations of injuries
- Accompanied by a person who appears to be controlling them
- Accompanying person resistant to leaving the room
- Accompanying person insistent on interpreting if patient is LEP
- Patient does not have possession of their identification or documentation
- Patient appears anxious or fearful
- Avoids eye contact
- Unable to speak for themselves
- Reported history does not match injuries
- Patient is unsure about whereabouts
- Inappropriate attire
- Patient appears younger than stated age
- Evidence of injuries at various stages of healing

**Dynamics of a Human Trafficking Victim:**

- A victim may not self-identify
- Victims may deny mistreatment and may not be truthful about their situation
- Victims may defend their trafficker and state their involvement is voluntary
- Victims may have been conditioned to not trust others, including medical providers and law enforcement

You are a MANDATED REPORTER. All suspected minor sex trafficking MUST be reported to CPS 410-887-TIME (8463) and Police - 911
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