Report by Human Trafficking Ad Hoc Committee

Exploration of Human Trafficking Impacts on EMS

The committee studied the subject of Human Trafficking as a potential for investigation and possible advisory by NEMSAC. The committee, at its inception, was advised that the determination must be made as to whether or not Human Trafficking impacts EMS, not how EMS can impact Human Trafficking.

After studying the subject, the committee feels that human trafficking has the potential to impact EMS if EMS professionals do not recognize the signs of human trafficking and subsequently fail to report child victims to the proper authorities, creating criminal and civil liability for the EMS professional and their provider (agency). 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 requires states to have child abuse reporting laws. In 2015, the Act was amended 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.

Although mandatory reporting for EMS professionals of human trafficking situations is not applicable in every state, unless it is in regard to minors, the committee believes that the education of EMS professionals on the subject of human trafficking will improve their ability to identify and intercede in cases of suspected human trafficking. Throughout the research for this report, the committee found various training programs on human trafficking created for EMS and other healthcare providers, but there is no consistency in the training and no single repository for these resources. 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.

There are opportunities for future exploration of training for EMS on human trafficking. One example would be to include human trafficking in the National Standard Education Curriculum to bring human trafficking training to all levels of EMS professionals at the beginning of their careers. Additionally, including information on suspected human trafficking in NEMSIS would aid in research and quality improvement, guiding evidence based practice.

The Ad hoc Human Trafficking Committee recommends that NEMSAC adopt the subject of Human Trafficking Education for EMS as a potential advisory to be considered by either this ad hoc committee or the Preparedness and Education Committee.

We appreciate the Council’s consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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References

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