

RE: Educating Canadian Medical Students on Human Trafficking in Canada

March 29, 2016

Dear Canadian Federation of Medical Students,

My name is Rachel Lomas and I am writing this letter on behalf of the Board of Directors of Chab Dai Canada. Our organization wants to express our support for incorporating human trafficking education into Canadian medical school curricula. In review of the CFMS Global Health Core Competencies in Medical Education we believe that human trafficking relates to competencies in each category. We point specifically to the following categories and competencies as being of greatest importance: Communicator (facilitating discussions and locating resources), Collaborator (developing multidisciplinary partnerships and understanding non-physician roles), and Health Advocate (identifying vulnerable populations, recognizing the role of primary health care, and understanding that advocacy requires partnerships).

Chab Dai Canada, in accordance with our partner organization Chab Dai International, believes the fight to end human trafficking will be won through dialogue and collaboration between organizations and stakeholders across the country, across professional designations and across varied communities. Neglecting to educate our medical students on human trafficking removes a crucial part of the network that will support patients, families, grassroots organizations and other allied health professionals who confront human trafficking on a daily basis. The burden of human trafficking goes well beyond global health considerations; as the number of stories about the inter- and intra-provincial sex traffic trade grow, we can see that human trafficking is a pediatric health concern, a women's health concern, and a First Nations health concern¹. Without the tools to identify victims or knowledge of the resources available, medical students will be unprepared to meet these challenges head-on. As a member of the health professions myself, I can attest to the problems that occur when a member of the team is unprepared to engage a patient's health concern – health is compromised and even lives are lost. Canadian anti-trafficking organizations need allies, and trafficked persons need to find help; ensuring that medical students are educated accordingly means that allies and help will be there to be found.

Chab Dai Canada truly hopes that you, the CFMS will consider the initiative to implement human-trafficking education for Canadian medical students. We believe that human trafficking in Canada is a health issue that requires nation-wide and interprofessional collaboration to successfully combat.

Sincerely,

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1. Canadian Women's Foundation. (2014) "No More" Ending sex-trafficking in Canada: Report of the national taskforce on sex-trafficking of women and girls in Canada. <http://www.canadianwomen.org/trafficking>