

RE: Educating Canadian Medical Students on Human Trafficking in Canada

February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016

Dear Canadian Federation of Medical Students,

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*Fraser Health Forensic Nursing Service Human Trafficking Team* are writing this letter in support of the initiative to incorporate human trafficking education into Canadian medical school curricula. *We are* aware of the six core competencies outlined by the CFMS Global Health Program, and *we believe* that human trafficking specifically relates to four of them: health implications of travel, migration and displacement; social and economic determinants of health; globalization of health and healthcare; and, human rights in healthcare.

As an organization, we consider educating future healthcare providers on human trafficking to be a critical opportunity to prevent human trafficking from occurring, and identifying and responding appropriately when persons who may be trafficked access health care. Canada is not immune to human trafficking. As other sectors work to combat trafficking health care has a part in the response.

Due to the violent and illusive nature of human trafficking, health complications can occur before, during and after the trafficking process. The health consequences can be minor to severe; acute *and* ongoing. A health care provider may be the only person a trafficked person comes in contact with during the trafficking process, emphasizing the importance of education and the means to respond. Trafficked persons may not identify as being trafficked, and without identification be released back into the hands of their trafficker.

Providing medical students with information about human trafficking, available screening protocols, and victim support services will allow future healthcare professionals to interact more confidently with patients who are potential trafficking victims. Ultimately, these future healthcare professionals will develop the skills necessary to identify victims of human trafficking and provide victims with potentially life-saving resources.

We hope that you, the CFMS, will consider this initiative, as human trafficking in Canada is a health issue that requires the involvement of healthcare providers to help effectively identify and support victims. Our organization is supportive of educational initiatives and would be happy to help in sharing information and protocols and in the development of curriculum.

Sincerely,

Tara Wilkie RN, BSN, Forensic Nurse Examiner  
***Human Trafficking Team***  
***Forensic Nursing Service***  
Surrey Memorial Hospital - Emergency Department  
13750 96 Avenue, Surrey BC, V3V 1Z2  
**Office Phone:** 604-953-4723  
**Office Fax:** 604-953-4724