

COMMISSION ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

October 21, 2020

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Annmarie Taggart, Jessica Butt, Julia Einbond, Kathleen Friess, Timothy Gallagher, Roman Guzik, Rolidel Hornazabal, Aldina Hovde, Ingrid Johnson, Brian Kearns, Patrick Kolibas, Brian Ross, Elizabeth Ruebman, Rush Russell, Victoria Vreeland.

Absent: Angelo Onofri, Dawne Lomangino-DiMauro, Gina Cavallo, Marisol Rodriguez, William Monaghan

Meeting called to Order approximately 11:00 a.m.

Quorum was not present. The Commission proceeded with the meeting as a Committee.

- I. Announcement of Open Public Meetings Act which stated: “the meeting was noticed on October 14, 2020, by sending written notice to the Star Ledger, the Bergen Record, Gannett, Town Square Media, Burlington County Times, Philly.com. Additionally, the written notice was filed with the Secretary of State.

- II. Presentation by the New Jersey Regional Operations Intelligence Center (ROIC) Analyst Jessica Butt (presentation was distributed to all Commission members via email by Kathleen Friess). Jessica reported 70 calls have been received by the hotline since the database began in April, 2020, additional calls were received in the two to three years prior to the creation of the current database. Of note, the highest number of calls were received from Essex County, followed by Gloucester, Middlesex, Morris and Ocean. Following the presentation, there was discussion concerning the merits of the national and state hotlines. One of the issues raised concerned how the calls to the state’s hotline were answered and if a trauma informed approach was being used.

Det. Sgt. Patrick Kolibas and Det. Sgt. Brian Kearns said the calls were answered by law enforcement officers, each with a number of years of experience in responding to emergency situations. They said multiple supervisors are also available to the hotline at all times. Sgt. Kolibas said the officers have some specific training in human trafficking, but they are trained to handle all types of emergency calls and to get help to callers in real time. Sgt. Kolibas said hotline workers also provide information for Covenant House. Regarding the approach used by the officers when answering calls, it was commented that at the height of the emergency when officers need to obtain crucial information, it may not be possible to establish a relationship with the victim, but that Covenant House would have contact with the victim after the emergency to provide support and arrange for the needed resources.

Discussion continued concerning the differences between the national and state hotlines. It was pointed out a main asset of the state hotline is that it is operated 24/7 by officers who are familiar with the areas and locations in the state of New Jersey. The ROIC also has access to multiple language translators. They know the local police departments to contact in emergency situations, and they confirm help was dispatched. In addition, Sgt. Kolibas said the number of victims who are using the state hotline number has increased in recent months. As for the national hotline, it was mentioned the national hotline maintains contact with the victim after the original call.

- III. Kathleen Friess provided an update on the Unified Statistical Data Project following a conversation with Dr. Anthony D’Urso of Montclair State University. Montclair was awarded the contract to conduct the Human Trafficking data compilation project. Kathy reported Dr. D’Urso had a number of questions regarding the type of data to be analyzed, as well as how the data would be obtained. Dr. D’Urso will prepare a letter with his questions, and following resolution of the questions a Memorandum of Understanding will be prepared.
- IV. Committee members were asked to review the prevention campaign materials which were provided via email.
- V. Brief discussion of the subject of Human Trafficking as a Public Health issue. Elizabeth Ruebman provided a link to the book, “Collaborating Against Human Trafficking: Cross-Sector Challenges and Practices,” by Kirsten Foot.

Future possible agenda items:

- a. Table top exercises for the committee to practice
- b. Extend an invitation to the National Human Trafficking hotline to attend a future committee meeting.

Next Meeting – November 18, 2020

No public comment.

Motion to adjourn seconded, voted on, and passed unanimously.