

Webinar Transcript: Child Trafficking In The United States

May 22, 2014

MS. KATHERINE CHON: -- are those that are physically obvious in terms of -- or maybe physically obvious in terms of the control tactic used against victims, fraud, fraudulence, employment offers and coercion that more and more sophisticated trafficking networks tend to use more coercion tactics to recruit and control victims of trafficking, whether it's putting them in situations of debt bondage, psychological manipulation, threatening them or threatening loved ones.

And then in terms of case examples of where trafficking occurs, you'll see here again when it comes to trafficking, it's a wide range of situations where commercial sex may take place from streets to indoor locations, online. It may happen in residential homes or even in legitimate businesses like hotels and motels and bars and clubs.

And on labor trafficking, examples have cut across multiple industries. And some of the ones you see here are domestic servitude, construction, the service industry. There have been cases of peddling and begging rings on the street where people are forced to sell, whether it's chocolate or soap or magazines door-to-door or on the street and then in factories and forestry and fishing, and then also including small business.

So you'll see from here that trafficking intercepts a lot with both illicit businesses and also legal and legitimate businesses as well.

One other thing I would mention when it comes to child trafficking is that it's not just a matter of trafficking happening in a business context, but traffickers could also be intimate partners or family members. There have been a number of cases investigated in the United States where victims have been U.S. citizens or national [inaud.] minors,

controllers, parents, guardians, intimate partners, extended family members, for both the purposes of sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

This map shows cases reported into the National Human Trafficking Resource Center which is a 24-hour hotline that anyone can call around the country to ask for referrals or more information or report cases or seek help. Increasingly more and more victims and survivors are directly calling the hotline for help. And you'll see through this case map that this is a human trafficking, there's a national problem and has impacted pretty much every state in the United States.

And then in terms of case breakdown, over the last five years and two years, you'll see that – I'll focus on that hot box of the last five years - more than 13,000 in total cases of human trafficking have been reported. And then if you look at the breakdown between victims who are foreign nationals versus U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents, both are substantive in nature of making up those cases that have been reported.

And this slide I wanted to specifically mention child labor trafficking. Because I think when we hear about human trafficking or child trafficking, the types of cases that we hear about in the media or in the newspaper are cases around child sex trafficking. But in the population you serve, you may also come across young people and children who are vulnerable to labor trafficking as well. And so just taking a set of these 400 potential cases of child labor trafficking, as I mentioned these sales crews and peddling rings, domestic work, restaurant work, small business and agriculture.

So, the second objective, we want to share information on how traffickers recruit and control to do what they do, to victimize the people under their control. So, who are the

traffickers? We know that they're individuals. They're informal criminal operations. And they're also businesses.

So, for example, there's been a lot of focus on supply chains and labor recruitments in terms of how labor is procured for certain types of businesses. It could be organized or not so organized crime. Increasingly, gangs are becoming more and more involved in human trafficking cases that have been investigated by law enforcement.

And then when it comes to the recruitment of children for the purposes of sex trafficking, there was this study that came out interviewing 25 sex traffickers in Chicago. And these are just a few quotes directly from them of who they were targeting. And so in the first one, you'll see what one person said, "What would you look for? Broken bones, unhappy with parents, abused." And so sex traffickers know where the vulnerabilities are and they proactively target people with those vulnerabilities.

The second quote here shows that this person recruited girls from another state so that they are brought to a location where the girl or young person may not have any friends or family members.

And the third quote shows that that the trafficker targeted girls who ran away from home or were kicked out of the home by their parents or young women who may have been on welfare or dropped out from school. And so, this is just to show that traffickers are very targeted when they do their recruitment. And many of the populations that they target are the... intersect with the program that your organization may interact with as well.

When it comes to child welfare and child trafficking, we don't have any national statistics. But at the local level, some information is emerging. For example, the Los Angeles Police Department did a review of the number of children they arrested on prostitution related charges and found that 59 percent of them were in the foster care system, the California Child Welfare Council found 50% to 80% of victims of commercial sexual exploitation, which includes child sex trafficking, are or were formerly involved with child welfare. And then in Connecticut, they found 86 out of the 88 children who are identified as child sex trafficking victims were also involved with child welfare services in some manner.

And child trafficking also intersects with the runaway and homeless youth population. According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, they found that the of the cases that come into the center – of the missing children -- 81% are defined as endangered runaways. And one out of eight of those endangered runaways are likely to be victims of human trafficking.

And another coalition of organizations surveyed 42 runaway and homeless youth organizations. In a particular series of questions, they were trying to assess whether these organizations were coming across child labor trafficking victims. And indeed, they found that a couple of organizations identified a significant number of child labor trafficking victims.

And then this is just a power and control wheel that will go into a little bit more description that you could reference later on.

And then in terms of identifying risk factors and indicators of child trafficking, this shouldn't surprise you given the previous slide, that 70% to 90% of commercially sexually exploited youth have a history of child sexual abuse. That they are 28 times more likely to be arrested for prostitution at some point in their lives than children who did not experience sexual abuse. And in addition, reports are starting to come out of youth who have experienced dating violence and sexual assault and rape are at higher-risk for trafficking. [We are] reinforcing the importance of prevention in these types of situations.

Additional risk factors. Isolation and some other forms of trauma. So, some evidence suggests that young people identifying as LGBTQ can be up to five times more likely than their heterosexual peers to be victims of trafficking, mostly because of feelings of rejection and alienation and also the runaway rates as well. And then also, our reports indicating that traffickers are targeting Native American children and youth who have other trauma-related risk factors.

Challenges to Identification. Why is it so hard to identify victims of trafficking? And similar to victims of other forms of violence, abuse, there are certain barriers to self-identification. Many victims may not even realize that they're victims of human trafficking because the terminology is relatively new in the popular culture. And they may not label their situation as human trafficking.

There is a perception that prostitution, at least when it comes to sex trafficking, is a victimless crime or that a child who's engaged in it may be seen as a criminal from a local law enforcement perception.

And also, that members of the community, front line responders, whether they're law enforcement, service providers, teachers, educators, may not be trained to identify victims of human trafficking.

Then finally, language barriers, isolation, misinformation, shame, stigma, those factors that you would imagine are also challenges to identification.

So when it comes to indicators, in the next few slides, you'll see these indicator wheels there in the center, there's the strongest indicators. So in this case, if there's a child under the age of 18 providing sex, that's a pretty strong indicator that there's a situation of trafficking happening. Whereas, if you go in the outer rungs and you see signs of physical or sexual abuse, it maybe trafficking or it may be some other form of abuse and exploitation.

When it comes to labor trafficking, if you look at the circle in the middle, if a child is confined to a workplace or owes a large debt and is unable to pay it off, those are stronger indicators of labor trafficking. And then on the outer rungs, they may be paid a little bit. But it may or may not indicate labor trafficking. It may be a broader labor exploitation.

And then when it comes to child sex trafficking, we'll go into what some of these indicators look like in the next few slides.

So, health indicators, physical indicators, problems associated with beatings, assaults, sexual violence, reproductive health problems, mental health, malnutrition, alcohol and

other drug abuse may be indicators that certainly some type of abuse is happening, but it could also be human trafficking.

Other indicators: A person's inability to speak on his or her own behalf, seeing a child with excess amounts of cash on hand or if you notice that someone's working for long hours, a presence of an older figure, whether they're male or female, who seems to be controlling, exhibiting fear, tension, shame and over-sexualized behavior are some common indicators. And as we mentioned earlier, chronically running away, irregular school attendance, references to frequent travel, unusual attachment to cell phone, strange tattoos. When it comes to domestic sex trafficking, traffickers have been known to brand the women and girls under their control with tattoos. And sudden changes in possessions.

And then finally, now that you have some basic information the scope of trafficking and how it's defined, where some of the challenges are and some of the indicators of child trafficking, a few resources that I wanted to end with.

The first one is, last September, the Administration for Children & Youth, Youth and Families, released official guidance on child trafficking to states and other programs specifically working with youth and you'll see on this slide more of a Table of Contents of what that guidance includes. And you can access that online. And accompanying that are some emerging practices. We don't really have many evidence-based practices in the anti-trafficking field yet. But this brief showcases what different parts of the country are doing when it comes to addressing child trafficking.

And then as I mentioned before, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center, you can go online to ask more information, call the 24-hour hotline or even text BEFREE for additional information, particularly if you're working with young populations, knowing that they have somewhere to text, if they ever are in situations of needing assistance or wanting more information, they can use that as a communications tool.

The hotline responsibilities. There's crisis response, receiving and referring tips. And also doing service referrals. So if you're calling from a part of the country and you're working with someone who maybe they need to be relocated or are looking for specific types of services, you can call the hotline to connect with another service provider. And then there's training and technical assistance.

So this is just a quick recap of our learning objectives. I hope you feel in this short time we've had that we've been able to meet these four objectives. And then finally, if you have any questions, here is my contact information for any additional communication. Thank you very much.

MS. PEGGY PECCHIO: Hello, this is Peggy Pecchio. I hope everyone's doing well this afternoon. I'm the Executive Director for Operation Keepsake. Cheryl Biddle, the Executive Director for Alliance for Healthy Youth, will be joining me in a few minutes.

Our programs collectively serve 30,000 to 40,000 in over twenty schools annually. We're located in the northeast region of Ohio. We serve the cities of Youngstown, Akron and Cleveland. These cities are included in what is commonly referred to as the rust belt, an area of the country that has many youth living below the poverty line in single-parent families. These youth also have high rates of dropping out of school, substance

abuse, premature parenthood and involvement in violence such as bullying, dating violence and gang membership.

The children we serve, like many of you, are vulnerable to the manipulation and coerciveness of traffickers. It is estimated that 2,000 youths are caught in the underground web of human trafficking each year.

Toledo, a city in close proximity to Youngstown, Akron and Cleveland, is often ranked fourth in our nation in the numbers of investigations, arrests, and rescues of trafficking victims. Many of them are under the age of eighteen.

Ohio, according to one report, cited 13 years old as the most common age in our state for youth to become victims of sex trafficking.

Our state, along with Cheryl and I, through the Positive Youth Outcomes Project, are seeking to prevent youth from becoming ensnared in human trafficking through three things: Awareness, Education and Outreach.

The overall mission of Operation Keepsake is to challenge young people to develop healthy relationships so that they may develop to their fullest potential in life. And for this particular endeavor, we've incorporated four activities, particularly thinking about the vulnerability of youth to human trafficking. And the first one is relationship education.

We are trying to help students identify emotional safeguards and physical boundaries to reduce their vulnerability. We want them to understand the warning signs of abusive or manipulative relationships. We want to increase their self-efficacy and assertiveness,

and also to develop a personal support system, particularly if they don't have one at home. And we know that traffickers are looking for the gaps in the lives of youth.

The second thing that we're doing is we've started a campaign called the Friends4Friends Campaign. This campaign is actually directed at the friend of the victim or a potential victim. And often young people share their burdens with a friend first, if they share it with anyone. They share it with their friend and not an adult.

So when we developed this campaign, we were focusing on the friend. Because we knew that if a friend was able to help them, that the victim might get the help and assistance they needed.

So the campaign is – there's many things in the campaign. We're doing posters. We're doing other types of outreach. But really when we're working with the youth, we wanted to listen to their friend, you know, have courage. Because we want them to make sure that they're telling their friend, "Look. We need to talk to an adult. Like, we cannot handle this alone." And also, we want them to remember that they may be the only person that the friend feels safe with. So the friend needs them and not to back away from it.

And part of the Friends4Friend campaign, we've developed in some schools peer leadership councils. And what the councils are doing is, they're developing films, short films, that are raising awareness of bullying, dating violence. And now we've included human trafficking. The films are to be an outreach for students in their school and then they're to take them to their community. And one of the ways that they're doing that is through our annual walkathon.

In addition, we're also asking the peer leadership councils to participate in other community opportunities that are raising awareness on this issue, this vital issue, of human trafficking. And one of them is the S.O.A.P campaign. If you're familiar with survivor Theresa Flores, she has a campaign that's called Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution. And what we do in this is bars of soap are distributed to local hotels and motels with the hotline for human trafficking on the soap. And Theresa indicated if one thing could have helped her, she would have wanted a bar of soap. And if she had something on it that would direct her to safety, she may have stepped forward sooner than she did.

So that's our peer leadership. And those are our two general things, relationship education and then the Friends4Friends campaign. But we know that some youth are more at-risk, and those are the youth in foster care and juvenile justice systems. And for those youth, we've started to work with Equine Assisted Learning so that they have additional help to help them develop the assertiveness they need, to help them recognize that they're being manipulated or maybe that they're being coerced into situations that will ultimately be unhealthy for them.

And we just piloted this program actually in April. We have several other sessions scheduled for the summer. We're pretty excited about that.

And last but not least, we have a campaign that is geared towards parents, teachers and school administrators. And also when we're thinking about it, those are the frontline responders. Potentially, this might be the most important thing that we're doing because this is helping to raise awareness to the adults in the community how many not even

have a clue about human trafficking, about the vulnerability factors of their youth. What are some of the indicators that would show a young person is involved or maybe involved? And also, we're providing our resources, such as training and access to other resources across the state.

So, the Not in Our Neighborhood campaign is really geared towards the adults in the lives of children who have the strongest potential to be drawn into this unfortunate situation. And as part of this not in our neighborhood campaign, we're kind of taking a heads up from the fatherhood initiative and we're taking this campaign also to barber shops and beauty salons because often, these are the people who are the voices in the campaign that you don't think about. But I saw that the fatherhood initiative did that and I thought, well, this will be a good place where we can put our campaign, Not in Our Neighborhood.

So that's what we're doing at the end of this, after Cheryl sharing with you. We have some resources. Now I'll turn it over to Cheryl.

MS. CHERYL BIDDLE: Thanks, Peggy. My name is Cheryl Biddle. I'm the Executive Director at Alliance for Healthy Youth. We are partnering with Operation Keepsake and the Positive Youth Outcome Project. Our programs have been in operation since 1987. And we have programs for high school and for middle school. Our agency is a nonprofit agency. Its purpose is to strengthen youth for healthy futures.

Our segment of the Positive Youth Outcome Project serves a mid-size urban city, Akron, Ohio. Population is about 198,000. There are about 23% of people in this area are under 18 years old and 84% of the students are economically disadvantaged.

And as we look at the students that we serve in Akron, we have about half and half African-American, half white. And our programs are in two locations. They are in the Akron City high school and then we also can serve youth at a place called Shelter Care and a partner on our grant. And they help children who are in foster care and who are homeless.

A little bit about our program services, again, we serve the Akron high school with the project. We train peer educators to advocate for healthy decision making across a wide span of teen issues. Of course, one of the topics that we include for awareness and for prevention is human trafficking, training high school people to appropriately share, raise awareness with their peers.

We also offer the Four Keys curriculum that Peggy mentioned that helps young people look at building healthy relationships. Our project includes also small group sessions that are held at the high school. And what we use those for is to reinforce what the students would have learned through the peer educators, through the Four Keys curriculum.

And then the last segment of our part of the project is also the S.O.A.P project. We use that as service learning for the young people who are in peer education program for those that are in the group sessions. And Peggy gave you a great description of that Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution, S.O.A.P project. And again, the idea is to utilize the strength and vitality of young people to reach out to their community also.

The youth that we serve then at shelter care also receive the four keys and the equine assisted learning. Our first program starts the first part of June. So we're excited about that.

The other thing I wanted to mention to you that our program services include is our mobile app. We're entitling it My Story Today. And it has useful segments for iPhones. There are local and national health numbers, of course, including human trafficking help lines. We include a weekly video. Its purpose is really to encourage, secondarily to educate. And we're using the Friends4Friends magazines as part of the Life 101 section as a magazine library.

And then lastly, I just want to talk a little bit about some of the ways in our area that we are working within our community and what some of the other folks in the community are doing also. Of course, we know the states have legislation. We have an ongoing emphasis to keep legislators informed. Our court systems are in the process of developing ways to identify child human trafficking victims who might be in detention.

Also in our area, I thought it was interesting that there were a number of churches that they gain an awareness from the pulpit. Lots of folks then surface from there as volunteers. And now we have a collaborative, the Summit County Collaborative, has six whole committees on it. People from all walks of life who are working together to help stop the human trafficking.

And also, the segment where we want to activate youth to a greater degree and we would encourage you all to do that too. Helping the youth to educate each other. Getting their input to raise awareness. What ideas do they have? Bring them right into

the project. The youth that we're working with in our part of the project will be labeling the S.O.A.P bars that will be put in the motels.

And also, we want to develop a hope kit so that we have something tangible to give those young victims, some needed personal items that can help them as they move back into a healthy life. Peggy, I know you've got some resources for us too.

MS. PEGGY PECCHIO: We just identified some books that we've been sharing with people that we've encountered and probably many of you have read some of these books. I'd just like to point out "The Slave Across the Street" by Theresa Flores. And Holly Austin Smith, hers was just released, "Walking Prey". I think "Walking Prey" is an absolutely great resource for first responders. She has a lot of insight into what has helped her. Because she felt that not only was she victimized by her trafficker, but the first line responders, many of them also re-victimized her. So those are just a couple of resources for you.

MS. TIA MEDLEY: My name is Tia Medley and I would like to welcome you to our segment of the presentation, POHSEY: A Collaborative Response to Sex Trafficking in Wisconsin. This presentation is facilitated by Dr. Wendi Ehrman and myself, Tia Medley.

DR. WENDI EHRLMAN: Hi, I'm Wendi Ehrman. For the remainder of our presentation, our grant funded project Proactive Outreach for the Health of Sexually Exploited Youth will be referred to as POHSEY. This project is a result of funding through the Healthier Wisconsin Partnership program which funds partnerships in Wisconsin between one of two medical institutions, the University of Wisconsin Madison and the Medical College of Wisconsin. There are partnerships between one of these institutions and the community

agency or agencies. And these are agencies that address a community based issue or a public health problem.

Our presentation today will briefly overview how we became involved in this area, what is known about sex trafficking and sexual exploitation of children, or sometimes referred to as youth, and how it is currently being addressed in Milwaukee, and finally the development of our POHSEY project, its goals, tasks and our future aspirations.

MS. TIA MEDLEY: Under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, also known as TVPA, CSEC is considered a severe form of trafficking. Again, this begs repeating. For a minor victim, there is no legal requirement to prove force, fraud or coercion, as often seen in cases of sex, stripping and pornography for money. Also, the law recognizes the assessment of psychological manipulation in CSEC as seen in the sex for survival, safety or drugs.

DR. WENDI EHRMAN: To start off our discussion about our program POHSEY, I'm going to talk a little bit about Operation Cross Country. Operation Cross Country was our seminal event which got us involved in this area of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation of children.

Operation Cross Country was, and still is, a nationwide prostitution sting focused on identifying underage victims. We first became aware of this sting in 2012 through our work in the juvenile justice detention center in Milwaukee. A year later, we became part of the local planning of Operation Cross Country in an effort to ensure that victims were at least offered medical attention.

Operation Cross Country is conducted by the FBI in collaboration and partnership with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, as well as the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

By 2013, Operation Cross Country was the seventh one that was performed in the largest sting to date. It occurred over a 3-day period in 76 cities nationwide. It involved canvassing areas known for prostitution in each of the cities where the operation took place. Once victims were identified, they were offered services that included job training, housing, counseling, medical and education assistance. And unfortunately, you can see that 105 sexually exploited children were identified during this three day operation. And unfortunately, Milwaukee had the second highest total with ten youth identified. We were only second to San Francisco.

Of the ten that were identified in the Wisconsin area, actually eight were from the Milwaukee area and seven were directly from Milwaukee. Out of those seven, we came to find out that two of them were from our adolescent health care clinic.

MS. TIA MEDLEY: In 2008, Wisconsin Office of Justice surveyed more than 1,300 service providers, law enforcement and district attorneys about their perceived interactions with victims of human trafficking. "Hidden in Plain Sight," a baseline survey of human trafficking in Wisconsin was this effort of the Violence Against Women Act, Human Trafficking Committee under the guidance of statewide viable committees.

The survey consisted of three parts: the initial survey, the follow-up survey and phone interviews. And it was conducted from March to August of 2007.

The goal of the survey was to increase community awareness of the issue of human trafficking, identify the need for training of human trafficking, and finally to promote inter-agency collaboration. Respondents identified 200 suspected victims of trafficking. Some form of human trafficking occurred in more than half of Wisconsin's 72 counties, and this included both urban and rural communities.

Seventy-five percent of those identified were victims of sex trafficking crimes, 15% were child victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation (and those again are children under the age of eighteen years old).

DR. WENDI EHMAN: Now we're going to talk a little bit about data specifically on the numbers of youth that were identified that have been trafficked in this area. So in 2013, the Milwaukee Homicide Review commission came out with a report on child and youth sex trafficking. This report was private commissioned and it was a collaborative effort between the Milwaukee Police Department, Homicide Review Commission and Rethink Resources which is a survivor's advocacy group.

Data in this report is limited. It came totally from police records, which included municipal citations, court reports and police memos. And as a result of that, we highly suspect these numbers to be underestimated. It doesn't include any youth identified by community organizations that may not have been in contact with the police.

The purpose of this report was to create a demographic profile of trafficked youth and to obtain descriptive information about the status of youth at the time of contact with the Milwaukee Police Department.

The results of this commissioner's report shows that there were 77 youth victims identified over a two year period between 2010 and 2012. The majority of these victims were female. Their ages ranged from 12 to 17, although the majority of them were age 16 or 17. As mentioned in the first slide in this presentation earlier, 66 percent were reported to be missing at some point in their life, 29 percent had experienced previous sexual assault or sexual abuse and 10 percent had experienced prior child abuse.

MS. TIA MEDLEY: The Greater Milwaukee area had a Rescue and Restore-funded effort from approximately January, 2004 to April, 2011. The grant was administered by a West Bend for-profit firm, Practical Strategies. Some of the funded service partners were in the Southeast Wisconsin area, like Franciscan Peace Makers and UMO. And a couple were in the Chicago area like the National Immigrant Justice Center. The network disbanded once the project lost its funding in 2011.

In January, 2005, the Milwaukee Federal Human Trafficking Taskforce was created in response to this report. In October of 2006, VAWA, a subcommittee of human trafficking, was formed. In February of 2008, through the efforts of VAWA human trafficking committee under the guidance of the state VAWA, Hidden in Plain Sight was released. In April of 2008, Wisconsin State Law 948.032 and 948.051 Prohibiting Human Trafficking and human trafficking of a child was signed.

In August 2011, the Human Trafficking Task Force of Greater Milwaukee first convened to draft recommendations aimed at improving the local response to human trafficking. Community feedback led to the formation of subcommittees to address four specific areas of concern: public awareness, service provision, education and legislation.

In July of 2012, Milwaukee participates in Operation Cross Country, which identified seven minors (highest in all participating cities).

May, 2013: Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission released a report that estimates the number of sex trafficked youth, using contacts with the Milwaukee Police Department.

In July of 2013, the Second Operation Cross Country in Wisconsin was held and it identified ten minors.

And most recently, in May of this year, Assembly bill 620 allowed victims of human trafficking to have a prostitution conviction vacated or expunged and it limits the ability to prosecute minors engaged in prostitution. Secondly, this law provides victims greater rights and confidentiality.

And finally, the new law provides a unified process to incorporate the forfeiture of property into a human trafficking case.

DR. WENDI EHRLMAN: So now we'll talk a little bit more about our POHSEY project, a Proactive Outreach for the Health of Sexually Exploited Youth. So our POHSEY project grew out of our involvement with groups such as the taskforce of human trafficking that Tia just mentioned. Both of us are involved in that group.

In addition to that, it grew out of an effort with our juvenile justice detention center to change the concept of trafficked youth from criminal to victim. As a result of all these efforts, we developed a partnership with a number of agencies who were also working

directly with these youth and decide to look for funding to improve the treatment of these youth that we were all coming in contact with. This resulted in our application and our subsequent funding from the Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program.

So the objectives of POHSEY are to create a coordinated effort to improve, identify, treat, and increase awareness of Commercially Sexually Exploited Children or Youth in Milwaukee. I use both because we use the pneumonic CSEC, but in our grant funded project we use POHSEY which we use for youth.

The collaborators in our project include Wrap Around Milwaukee which is a nationwide mental health service coordinator and service provider. We are also part of that collaboration with the Milwaukee Adolescent Health Program. We represent the medical side of this project. In addition, we are partners with our District Attorney's Office and with ReThink Resources that are previously mentioned in the report on the 77 youth that were identified as being trafficked in Milwaukee. And again, ReThink Resources is an advocacy and survivor support group.

The timeline for our project is two years. We know that's a short period of time, but we look at this project as being more of a pilot than an introductory project to future ideas that we have.

So the history of POHSEY's development, we decided to become involved in this doing a number of things that I mentioned. We have noticed, both Tia and I have noticed, that there's been more youth identified at our juvenile detention center and at our primary care clinics. And as our awareness grew, our identification of these youth also grew.

In addition, we've both been attending multiple meetings for multiple agencies that focus on different aspects of child trafficking and sexual exploitation, including one through the juvenile justice center, called the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative. This is looking at alternative placements to youth as we all believe that these youth are victims and shouldn't be locked up as criminals. We're also part of the Children Hospital of Wisconsin Trafficking Group which is looking at making recommendations for treatment of identified victims in the emergency room. And as previously mentioned, the Milwaukee County Task Force and the Milwaukee County Human Trafficking Mental Health Group which is looking at improving services, mental health services, for identified youth. And finally, as I mentioned, the human trafficking task force of Greater Milwaukee which is a community based organization looking to increase awareness of human trafficking, not just youth trafficking, but also adult trafficking, in and around the Milwaukee area.

Another reason that we became involved in this is just our overall frustration at the lack of response, recidivism that we were seeing with the same youth coming in and out of detention, lack of medical institution awareness. Our emergency rooms weren't identifying these youth. We could track them as going in and out of different places and nowhere is it mentioning that trafficking was brought up. And finally, the lack of coordination and gaps in medical care and in treatment.

The identification of Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program grant finally gave us availability to go after funding, to research this problem and to work collaboratively to identify strategies for prevention, identification, care, and training, using all of our expertise.

So the goals of our project are to (1) identify the extent of the problem in Milwaukee in a broader term. So we're not just looking at kids that have been picked up by the police department. We're looking at kids that have interacted in all of our settings, whether it's been through our mental health agencies, through our medical clinics, as well as through the legal system.

After identifying these kids, we want to take a better look at them to see what they all have in common and develop a vulnerability index that will help identify them as well as hopefully proactively identify youth that are at-risk for trafficking.

We also want to develop better screening tools for agencies to use to identify these youth and create teaching modules that can be used for community presentations as well as in medical presentations.

We are looking at creating a community as well as a victim resource manual. One would be for community agencies to be able to refer and identify youth to agencies or services that they need. And another would be directly for the victims to resource in acute situations. So something that they could use when they actively need to get some help. And finally, we want to work on improving our referral system and collaboration of services amongst agencies in the Milwaukee area.

So from these goals, we've created a series of tasks and one of these tasks was to create a collaborative database which would have data from all of our agencies entered into it. And from that, we want to create the vulnerability index. We also want to go through and review and revise existing tools for identification, of which there are many out there.

We want to collaborate with our community partners to develop protocols for urgent medical responses, for instance, in emergency rooms or urgent care centers when these youth come in and they're identified or they identify themselves. Also in primary care clinics where many of these kids may go to, but the providers may not be aware of what's going on with these kids and then in our juvenile detention centers.

We are also going to look at identifying. And once identifying existing resources, we hope to vet them since we're aware that not all of the resources that have identified themselves as providing service actually are trained to provide services. So we hope to look at community resources and look to see, for instance, that they are trauma informed and if their staff actually have expertise in training in the area of sex trafficking.

We want to work on creating teaching modules as I mentioned, for both health care providers, mental health care providers, as well as for community agencies.

And we want to continue our involvement and our collaboration with many of these local task forces and groups so that we're not all out there doing piecemeal work. We want to work together and coordinate some of these efforts.

MS. TIA MEDLEY: As MAHP staff, we offer trainings to our PREP partners and to the youth that they serve. Our preventative efforts have included providing harm reduction strategies for junior and high school students, discussing risk factors for sexual exploitation, including Internet and tech safety to parents, teens and families through various venues.

We've hosted a weekly education and free STI screenings night for Project Q and LGBTQ resource drop in center and a reproduction health screen, pregnancy testing and STI screens for our local youth shelter.

We also shared in protocols and patient identification strategies to fellow providers. We facilitated a sexual health skills night addressing identification and treatment concerns of CSEC or youth at-risk for commercial sexual exploitation. We participated in a panel discussion after the screening of the film, "Not My Life", a film by Robert Bilheimer and narrated by Glenn Close. "Not My Life" depicts the scourge of human trafficking on a global scale. It was filmed on five continents in a dozen countries.

Finally, at the juvenile detention center in Milwaukee County, we provide general health screens, risk assessments to identify acute needs, sexual health concerns, STI screenings, prophylactics and treatment and reproductive services and referral for long-acting reversible contraception.

Our prevention strategies focus on identifying risk factors that will reduce future vulnerabilities that may increase the youth perceptibility to sexual exploitation in the future. Harm reduction strategies include encouraging teens to practice safer habits when using social media and other forms of technology. Some of the websites that we've identified as having questionable content include: Instagram, the app that gave birth to the dreaded selfie; Snapchat, whatever you post disappears in a few seconds. However, app designers have created SnagIt that actually captures that image that you wanted to disappear. Slingshot. This app allows users to send short video messages with just a couple of taps of the screen.

Also, I want you to be aware that a thriving underground of sex trade occurs on both Twitter and Facebook, using smartphones only. Both contracted services and disposable phones serving as a preferred method of interaction. Heaven or Hell is an escort rating board where youth are judged based on everything from stretchmarks to accuracy of the folder description provided. YouTube, videos of young girls and young boys are often presented initially on YouTube.

And Back Page. According to AIM Group, a media research and consulting firm, Back Page accounts for about 70 percent of prostitution advertising among the top five websites that carries such ads in the U.S. And last year alone, they earned \$22 million from prostitution ads.

Finally, 10.X. It began directly marketing their products to clients who want to know where to buy sex online. This particular app is so advanced that all you had to do is point to the screen and it will tell you where to find a young child within five miles of your location.

By providing community and partner resources and being available for complication on suspicious cases, we are poised to offer victims and at-risk youth direct support and referral to trauma-informed providers. Our most challenging prevention strategy, but the one that strengthened our efforts, is facilitating interagency coordination, of services to CSEC to ensure continuous, appropriate and sensitive services.

Through our efforts and the feedback that we received, we know that there is more work to be done. Community and provider requests, gaps in available care, and through our own experiences, we identify future activity for which we hope to secure funding and

additional partner involvement. These activities include trained victim advocates and crisis workers, improve coordination of care through case management, increase training for community agencies, increase outreach and public awareness initiatives to statewide stakeholders, create a 24-hour hotline for victims, families, school personnel and service providers to access resources. Through this line, live staff will assess whether the stated need is acute, requiring an immediate service, or urgent, requiring 24-hour or less response.

We also hope to expand access to appropriate services that offer trauma informed training. And finally, develop a youth-based resource book with a resource card and IOS and Android-based availability app that allows GPS access. So users may identify the nearest resources and also offers a kill switch that will erase previous searches.

DR. WENDI EHRMAN: I'd like to thank you for allowing us to give this presentation and if anybody has questions for us or wants contact information, we have it on the slide here. Feel free to email us.

MS. ITEGE BAILEY: Thank you.

MS. ITEGE BAILEY: Thank you to all of our presenters. That was great information that was shared, the data, the programmatic information as well as the resources that were provided. The presentation really highlighted that this is a priority issue and that there's strength in the collaborative effort for addressing trafficking.

At this time, we would like to invite participants to ask questions by using the raise your hand feature or type your questions into the question box. We already have received a

number of questions. So I'm going to go ahead and start with the ones that we've received thus far.

The first question is for Katherine. Can you please define debt bondage as well as drug rehab rings?

MS. KATHERINE CHON: Sure. In plain speak language, I'll give you a situation when it comes to child sex trafficking situations. So we had a case in Washington, D.C. where there was a young person who ran away from home and an older woman offered her an apartment where she and her friend could live. And at first said, oh, you can live here for free, but then eventually said, no. You need to start paying some money. And this is just a teenager. And then used that as a hook to control the teenager in a strip club. And debt bondage usually happens where -- all of us have some type of debt. Where it turns into debt bondage is if someone is using that debt and forcing you to pay it off in very specific ways. And it turns into bondage also because it often is very difficult to pay off the debt.

So the types of schemes that you'll come across is where -- so in this particular case, the teenager may owe \$5,000 and then the person controlling her and the trafficker would say, okay. You can pay it off by going into the strip club. But she never really sees any of the money. All the calculations are done behind the scenes on these books that supposedly exist. And so debt bondage is where there's debt. Someone is forcing you to pay off the debt in specific ways. And then also usually there are extremely high interest rates attached to the debt to make it really difficult for you to pay it off and then other life expenses keep getting added to the debt.

MS. ITEGE BAILEY: And can you also define drug rehab rings?

MS. KATHERINE CHON: Well, I'm not sure what that question refers to, other than I'll take a stab in terms of the substance abuse that is related to human trafficking operations. Sometimes traffickers will target those with substance abuse issues because they may be easier to control from a victimization perspective or in other situations someone who has experienced the violence of trafficking, may self-medicate and develop a substance abuse issue.

MS. ITEGE BAILEY: Okay, thank you. And our next question is for Peggy and Cheryl. During your presentation, you spoke about posters and DVDs that you're using. Are those available for other organizations? And how can other organizations access those resources?

MS. PEGGY PECCHIO: That's a great question. What we're doing is, our project actually started – we were just funded for this project in October. So we started putting everything together in January. The posters are available, but the DVD will not be available until the fall. Currently, we have a DVD on bullying and dating violence from our peer leadership groups. But the one that's going to include human trafficking won't be available until the fall. But if you want to contact us with your contact information, we can get that to you as soon as we have it available.

MS. ITEGE BAILEY: Okay, great. And Peggy, can you talk a little bit more about the equine-assisted learning program?

MS. PEGGY PECCHIO: Oh, sure. It's something that we were actually approached by the juvenile justice system in our area to, you know, their question was, "What are you doing about human trafficking?" We had been working on some things in bullying and dating violence and then they asked us a question, "Are you going to be adding human trafficking to it?"

Well, the equine-assisted learning, it came out of our thoughts on bullying and dating violence. Now, of course, we know the nuances are definitely different when you incorporate human trafficking prevention. But what we're doing is we're weaving relationship education with equine assisted learning. And so the thought process is that we would help young people – no, of course, this is prevention.

None of these people have identified themselves as being involved in human trafficking and we haven't identified them either. But this is an opportunity for them to develop a sense of personal control and to get themselves out of the victim mode. It's an opportunity for them to develop some efficacy on assertiveness.

So here they are able to control a 2,000-pound animal in an arena. Well, then they can control people who are trying to abuse them or manipulate them or have coercive tactics towards them. They're not riding the animal. They're actually learning how to control the movement of the horse in the arena. And it's very fascinating. We're developing it with Dr. Mary Mallock. She has done other projects on equine assisted learning and we approached her to help collaborate with us. And like I said, our pilot session went in April and we have several more sessions going on this summer. We're hoping to – what we'd like to come out of it is an actual curriculum that can be reproduced by other organizations.

MS. ITEGE BAILEY: Okay, thanks. And our next question is for Wendy and Tia. Could you please elaborate on the vulnerability index? Does it mean youth who are runaways or youth who are demonstrating certain risk factors?

MS. TIA MEDLEY: So that's a very good question. So it would be the latter. So we look for certain youth risk factors including truancy from school, mental health issues, former trauma. But we know that children who are runaways are a very high indicator. Also children who have been previously sexually assaulted.

DR. WENDI EHRLMAN: One of the things that we actually hope to do if we develop this vulnerability index which we're going to develop it based on some retrospective data on youth that we already know have been involved in trafficking is we're working with Wraparound Milwaukee which is the mental health agency and they see a lot of youth and siblings of a lot of youth. And they'd like to take that vulnerability index and apply it prospectively to the younger youth that they're seeing who they feel maybe at-risk of becoming involved in trafficking and look to see if they have risk factors and then they will target those youth especially with preventative counseling efforts.

MS. ITEGE BAILEY: And with the tools, creation of the vulnerability index and screening tool that you mentioned as a goal of the project, has it been published in any literature yet? Or can agencies request for any modifications for youth in other jurisdictions? Is it something that's available?

DR. WENDI EHRLMAN: Ask us in two years. We're in the process right now of collecting data. We're already aware of some of the commonalities that we've seen amongst youth. We

know of youth right now that all of our agencies have served that are involved in trafficking. And so we're kind of looking for similarities among those youth and identifiers that maybe they could have been picked up sooner had we known. So it's in the process of being created.

MS. ITEGE BAILEY: And this question I think all of our presenters can address if you have information. There's a question about data available. So most of the information and data that's available related to trafficking seems to be related to urban areas in big cities. Is there any information or data for rural areas? And if so, what are the sources and where can that information be found?

MS. CHERYL BIDDLE: Polaris Project would have the most accurate information. The biggest issue around human trafficking, which also makes it one of the more profitable crimes, is that it does go on so invisibly through our community. So even the numbers that we have, we fear that they're vastly underestimated. So again, I think Polaris would have the most accurate numbers as far as children who are human trafficked around the country.

MS. PEGGY PECCHIO: I would add to that thought, I would just add – and this is just something that we've learned here in Ohio, that there is instances of trafficking that are also associated with fracking. So yet another area of groups coming into a state, a lot of people, and also then human trafficking occurring in that type of a setting also.

MS. ITEGE BAILEY: Okay. And the next question is can the National Trafficking Hotline number be presented? Can someone say what that number is? The hotline number.

MS. KATHERINE CHON: Sure. This is Katherine. It was on one of my leader slides in the presentation. But it's 1-888-373-7888. And then you can also find the text number and the websites on one of those slides.

MS. ITEGE BAILEY: For participants in the webinar, if you don't have the slide yet, we will definitely be sending out the slides from all of our presenters at the conclusion of the webinar. So all attendees will be receiving a copy of the slide.

We have a question here about trafficking definitions. An attendee has a question about how these trafficking definitions and distinction from sex work play out at the local law enforcement level. It seems like there would be a lot of risk cases getting arrested and convicted, especially when fear and trauma are involved for the victim.

MS. KATHERINE CHON: I'll at least start addressing it, at least at the federal level, though it's a local question. Across the country, if you look at the federal definition of sex trafficking, essentially any minor in a commercial sex activity would be a victim of sex trafficking. But local and state laws around prostitution differ. And so in some places, those victims of sex trafficking maybe treated as perpetrators of a crime and sent to juvenile detention. And then over the last few years, increasingly states have been passing what's called Safe Harbor-type laws, essentially saying we need to provide services and protect these child victims of sex trafficking instead of putting them in juvenile detention. And so it just depends on where you are locally and what your laws look like. But I think the other presenters maybe will speak more to their local circumstances.

DR. WENDI EHRLMAN: Hi, this is Wendi Ehrman. I just wanted to mention that in Milwaukee, actually a lot of the youth that are in detention that have been trafficked are not picked up on trafficking charges. They're picked up on other things such as shoplifting. And oftentimes, the reason that they're kept at detention once it's discovered is because the judges have no place else for them to go because they're worried about them running back to the same things they were doing prior to being detained.

In the thing last year when ten youth were picked up, I don't believe any of them were issued tickets or citations. I think that the effort was made to try to help them. But I don't think that any of them were actually charged with prostitution. And we're finding that not a lot of youth are actually picked up on prostitution charges. It's usually something else.

MS. ITEGE BAILEY: Okay. There's another question for all of our presenters. It's a question related to any sort of training. So where can an organization find training materials to use with teachers in school districts?

MS. KATHERINE CHON: This is Katherine Chon from ACF. So the National Human Trafficking Resource Center, if you go to the link which is traffickingresourcecenter.org, there are a number of materials that you can download for training purposes, including for educators.

And then earlier on in the presentation, I mentioned the federal strategic action plan on services to victims of human trafficking. And in there, it outlines some of the action items that the Department of Education will be taking when it comes to responding to human trafficking. And so you may see some of the resources that they intend on developing for future purposes, at least on the federal level.

MS. TIA MEDLEY: This is Tia Medley from Milwaukee Adolescent Health Program. There's also a program by the name of My Choice, My Life out of Boston. It does focus specifically on females, but it is a renowned program to work with children who are involved in commercial sexual exploitation.

MS. ITEGE BAILEY: And Tia, can that be accessed online?

MS. TIA MEDLEY: The program cannot be accessed online, but they do offer trainings which are \$400 per person. So their website does provide contact information. And again, it's My Life, My Choice.

MS. ITEGE BAILEY: Okay, thank you.

MS. TIA MEDLEY: You're welcome.

MS. ITEGE BAILEY: And we have another question related to working with school districts. This one is specifically for Peggy and Cheryl. Peggy and Cheryl, do the schools that you work with readily accept the program that you're implementing? Or are there a number of awareness building activities that you undertake first within each community?

MS. PEGGY PECCHIO: I think that's a great question. Cheryl, you can respond after I'm done. But one of the things that we are already in schools providing programming. So this has been something that we've begun to address. So they have a history with us. They feel comfortable with us coming into their school district. And so actually, it's the state district

often that come and say, "Will you please address this issue?" And that's one of the things that's happened with regard to human trafficking.

MS. CHERYL BIDDLE: We have Alliance for Healthy Youth. We have a similar situation in our area. We've been providing program services for about 27 years. So that we have a good working relationship with about sixty different school districts. So that said, as issues come about that we understand affect the young people that we all care about, we began to provide programming to address the needs. We did a survey of the teachers that we served to find out, for example, how much information they've already gained. The State of Ohio has information on their website, but we can be part of the catalyst to get the information out. We've begun in a preliminary way to raise awareness and give a help number. We hope that we'll be able to do more in developing prevention materials for the schools and help the students.

MS. ITEGE BAILEY: I think we have time for one more. We're a little over time, but we have a lot of questions here. So I'm going to ask one more question. And then for attendees, presenter information is included in the slides and you'll be able to reach out directly to presenters. But we have a quick question which is why I'm asking it. It's related to the map that you included in your presentation, Katherine. It was a heat map. And an attendee wants to know where they can access something similar for their community to get that sort of data.

MS. KATHERINE CHON: Sure. That map is from the National Human Trafficking Resource Center. So if you just go online, it's from one of their reports. I think they produce annual reports and then they produced one recently that was multi-year that included that map.

MS. ITEGE BAILEY: Okay, thank you. And so that is going to conclude our webinar. Thank you everyone for attending. We hope that you gain some useful information, programmatic information data and resources. Again, unfortunately due to time, we're unable to get to everyone's questions. But you do have contact information for all of our presenters. So you can definitely feel free to email presenters with any additional questions you might have. And as I stated earlier, we will be sending out the slides to all of the registered participants and the webinar will actually be archived and it will be on the Family Services Bureau website. And that takes approximately around a month for it to be posted.

So thank you again for attending the webinar and thank you to all of our presenters for the information that you provided for us today. Have a good afternoon everyone.

(END OF TRANSCRIPT)