



Written Testimony for HB771
Health Occupations- Human Trafficking Awareness Training

Position: FAVORABLE

On behalf of the Greater Baltimore Medical Center's SAFE/DV Program, I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB771, Health Occupations- Human Trafficking Awareness Training.

The SAFE/DV Program, based in Towson, Maryland, delivers comprehensive, direct services to individuals of all ages who have experienced human trafficking. Through robust community outreach efforts, we work to prevent trafficking and raise awareness by providing specialized training to professionals and community members who are likely to encounter victims. Each year, these initiatives educate thousands of individuals across multiple disciplines. Since the launch of the Anti-Trafficking Initiative in 2015, we have witnessed firsthand the pervasive and harmful impact of human trafficking throughout Maryland. Our mission is to identify, respond to, and prevent human trafficking within our community.

Research indicates that the majority of individuals experiencing human trafficking access healthcare services at some point during their exploitation. In many cases, a healthcare encounter may represent the only opportunity for a victim to seek assistance and connect with life-saving resources. Despite this critical point of contact, studies consistently demonstrate that many healthcare professionals lack adequate training to identify and respond to this highly vulnerable population. Increasing awareness and specialized training within the healthcare field is essential. Healthcare providers are uniquely positioned to recognize signs of trafficking, implement trauma-informed care, safely separate patients from potential traffickers, and conduct private conversations aimed at connecting individuals with vital resources. Without education and awareness efforts, many victims may remain unidentified and without access to the help they urgently need.

Voting in favor of HB771 will significantly enhance the ability of healthcare professionals across Maryland to promptly identify victims, respond using a trauma-informed approach, and connect individuals with life-saving resources. Expanding access to comprehensive human trafficking awareness training will strengthen prevention efforts, improve victim identification, and promote informed engagement with investigative and prosecutorial processes. Increased awareness will also facilitate access to critical support services, ultimately contributing to safer communities throughout the state. We urge you to vote in favor of HB771. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

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