

Agenda
Tuesday June 13, 2023
9:00am - 11:00am
WebEx

Call to Order Ashley McAree & Amanda Rodriguez, Co-Chairs

Approval of Minutes Jennifer Stine, Secretary

Member Updates

- Introductions and Agency Updates

United Against Human Trafficking

- Elyse Lewandowski- Pathway Referral Network

Legislative/Policy Updates

- Legislative Updates- Amanda Rodriguez
 - SAFE Harbor

New Business

- Placement Concerns for Youth
- Upcoming Change to Cannabis Laws
- Frederick County Human Trafficking Task Force: Protocol Development
- Towson Town Festival
- Baltimore County Fire Department Training

Upcoming

- Trainings/Events/Conferences
- Community Outreach
- Next Meeting: September 12, 2023

Roundtable Discussion

Adjournment

- Regional Navigator Meeting- Immediately to Follow

Baltimore County Human Trafficking Work Group

June 13, 2023

Meeting Minutes

Present at meeting: Amanda Rodriguez (Co-chair), Ashley McAree (Co-Chair), Carmen Christiana, Diana Beeson (TurnAround), Elyse Lewandowski, Kamesha Stokes, Rosalyn Berkowitz, Joyce Williams, Wendy Hildebrand, Danielle N, Daivd Williams, Krista Trahan, Kelly Traux, Liz Kimbel (Restoring Ivy Collective), Jennifer Stine (Secretary), Melissa Cross, Amy Baker, Rhonda Sanco, Tanya Araya, Candace Parrott, Michael Ford; Dave Blackburn

Call to Order: 9:03am

Approval of Minutes: Joyce Williams moved to approve, no opposed; minutes approved

Agency Updates

Kelly Traux – GBMC – Building out the SAFE website to include HT, almost complete; billboard should be up for 1 month by the beginning of July in the Towson area. Been providing packets to urgent cares, and they've been very receptive.

Liz Kimbel – intro to Restoring Ivy Collective, network of survivors that provides supports and services
Amanda Rodriguez – TurnAround – partnering with YWCA of Anne Arundel County to open housing for minor human trafficking survivors. Started building, expect to be open in Spring 2024. On campus of YWCA safe house; TurnAround will be providing programming. Open to minors statewide.

Elyse Lewandowski, United Against Human Trafficking Group

United Against Human Trafficking has been a Houston, TX-based organization since 2007. Her program is Pathway Referral Network, around since 2018. Resource for clients to connect to service providers nationwide faster and more efficiently. Centralizes resources. Currently in TX, FL, NE, ID, MD (Restoring Ivy Collective is a partner). Elyse did a demo of how the system operates so that it can be a resource for us in MD. Elyse will send follow-up info to Ashley to pass around to the group.

Legislative Policy Updates

Amanda Rodriguez – 18 bills that TurnAround was watching; 17 of them passed, including SAFE Harbor. Will be 2 pathways that children can get out of the criminal justice system: 1) Law enforcement cannot arrest for an act of prostitution if they encounter a minor they suspect is a survivor; 2) Law enforcement refers to regional navigator, reports to CPS, not arrest, if suspected minor survivor who has been picked up for a list of enumerated crimes. If they *are* arrested, the child can file a motion, and the child will eventually be dismissed, if the crimes are found to be a direct result of being a victim of trafficking. Hope that this will lead to more children being referred to regional navigator program, because no longer going to be a threat of prosecution if they disclose.

Ashley McAree – congratulations, watching the testimony was amazing! Any plans for training statewide, now that SAFE Harbor has passed? Amanda – in discussions with the schools, sounds like GOCAPP is discussing it, but it will likely be that each County has to take on their own process for training.

Jennifer Stine – congratulations on SAFE Harbor! Placement crisis is a big issue. Tried to talk with various legislators about allocation, not legislation, but it didn't go anywhere this session. Serious concerns about safety of the youth, particularly those in hotels with 1-1 setup, and the risk they are at for trafficking and other things. We are excited for the new placement being created by TurnAround but want immediate, short-term help in the interim, and there are existing beds that could be funded to house the kids in hotels, hospitals, and floors of the Department. Will be meeting with legislators and County Council in the coming weeks and months, and would love support from this group in whatever ways make sense.

New Business

Placement Concerns for Youth

Upcoming Change to Cannabis law

Danielle Nickles – discussed this in Child Protection meeting re: mandated reporting, will it affect trafficking, etc. Some Counties are still deciding what their specific laws/regs will be, but state has

made it legal on 7/1/23. Anyone over age 21 is able to possess/use cannabis, with some limits on amount, use, etc. Will be a “personal use” and “civil” use regs, based on amount. Over civil amount becomes criminal; under that is civil. Over 21, can share cannabis with others over 21, but can’t sell or get anything in exchange for it. Will still be considered something “of value,” so can still apply for trafficking exchange. Therefore, should not change charges, etc. around trafficking.

Resource:

<https://www.peoples-law.org/recreational-marijuana-cannabis-use-and-possession-maryland>

Frederick County Human Trafficking Task Force: Protocol Development

Diana Beeson – Thanks to David Williams! Looking to establish protocol in Frederick County. Looking for ideas, input, volunteers to help. David – one big issue is that there are no metrics/data for collecting to measure success. Ashley McAree volunteered to help and bring GBMC in; agrees with the need for data, making that collection uniform. Tania pointed out that there is already some data collection and level of cooperation and transparency; she would like to be part of this group. Ashley McAree – law enforcement obviously needs to be involved, Dave Blackburn said he is happy to be involved. Diana took down the names of who offered and will reach out. Discussed trying to get together during the summer so as not to lose momentum. Anyone else interested in participating in the protocols group can let Ashley, Diana, or David know.

Towson Town Festival

Ashley McAree – Thanks to those who helped out – was really successful! Reached a lot of people, lots of interest in the topic, raised a lot of awareness. Lots of education done around misconceptions. Really want to keep doing those community outreach events. Can also share info about partner agencies.

Baltimore County Fire Department Training

Ashley McAree – Talking about this for a long time, been busy and put on the back burner. Ashley did a training for the Navy last year that turned out well, and she is updating it to meet the needs of the fire department. Will be speaking to Det. Blackburn and Det. Kilpatrick to discuss how fire can collaborate with police; Stacey Amparo will give input on prosecution; anyone else can give input when Ashley sends it around. Goal is to have the presentation completed by our next meeting in September but will send it around before then, hopefully get the trainings started by the end of the year or start of next year.

Upcoming

Let Ashley know about any upcoming trainings, events, conferences and will share with everyone
Next meeting 9/12/23

Roundtable Discussion

Ashley – thoughts on the Pathways system? Concerns about the fees? Liz – worth the expense because it’s such a good system, as compared to the free, chaotic process we have now. Only one person per agency has to do it, and we can help each other out.

Adjournment: 10:17