

## Arsht Research on Ethics and Community Grant

### Human Trafficking: An Emerging Medical Epidemic

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#### Abstract

Although slavery has been abolished in this country for over a century, there is currently an active trade in human lives, “Human Trafficking,” for profit, which makes this a significant contemporary moral issue. Human Trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a person, mostly women and children, for labor and services, through the use of force, fraud and coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt, bondage or slavery, which has created a large number of new “slaves.” In Florida, the most prevalent types of human trafficking are labor trafficking in the agriculture and tourism/hospitality industry and domestic minor sex trafficking with an average age of entry into trafficking of 12-14. Nationwide, since 2007, there have been 89,360 calls to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center with 4,323 calls coming from all parts of Florida. While there are laws to protect victims and federally funded benefits, even for illegal immigrants, the **first step** is the recognition that they are victims. Often that recognition occurs first in a doctor’s office. A study by the Family Violence Protection Fund revealed that nearly 1/3 of trafficking survivors had been seen by a health care provider during their captivity.<sup>15</sup> Awareness and training in identifying victims can empower physicians and healthcare providers to identify and help trafficking victims obtain the proper care they need. Once identified, victims can be reported to a national resource hotline, the local human trafficking task force and a number of support services and agencies. The goals of the healthcare interventions are the safety and recovery of the victim and the successful prosecution of the trafficker. This project will address implications for professional practice, public policy and human rights. The goals of this project are to educate healthcare professionals: 1. about the issues of human trafficking, 2. to understand their roles in identifying victims, 3. to develop skills in caring for victims, and 4. to increase knowledge about the proper resources for these victims. These goals are to be accomplished by educational seminars. These training sessions will be developed and provided by the principal investigator with support of her mentors. This project will train approximately 600 medical students, 200 residents and 100 community health care providers. Pre- and post-surveys will be obtained from the participants regarding their knowledge of the subject and the usefulness of the information to their clinical practices.

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