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Identification and Referral for Human Trafficking Survivors in Health Care Settings: Survey Report

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Key findings from this survey confirm that human trafficking victims access health care services while they are being trafficked and that health care providers are potentially able to identify and refer a much larger number of human trafficking victims for services. Furthermore, the survey results provide feedback on the current questions being used to identify victims of trafficking in health care settings. The survey results highlight the need for health care providers to receive training and information in order to better support human trafficking survivors.

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INTRODUCTION

CAST is continuously committed to learning from human trafficking survivors to adapt and create evidence-based models to meet their emerging needs and to inform the field on best practice models for services and training. Through the generous support of the Kaiser Permanente Southern California Fund, Queenscare, and Dignity Health, CAST currently provides training to health care professionals in Los Angeles County to increase the identification and referral of human trafficking survivors for services. CAST engaged in a survey of human trafficking survivors in the Fall of 2016 in order to inform the trainings for health care professionals and to understand any changes in the experience of survivors of human trafficking within health care settings. The main purpose of the survey was to identify whether trafficking victims are accessing health care services while in their trafficking situation and if there is potential for identification and/or referral by staff in health care settings. Furthermore, this survey aimed to evaluate the questions currently being used for identification in health care settings through the perspective of human trafficking survivors. The survey was distributed amongst members of the National Survivor Network (NSN) and clients of CAST's Case Management Program. This brief report presents key findings from the survey results.

National Survivor Network (NSN)

In February 2011, CAST launched the National Survivor Network (NSN) in an effort to foster connections between survivors of diverse forms of human trafficking and to build a national anti-trafficking movement in which survivors are at the forefront and recognized as leaders. The NSN's mission is to bring together a community of survivors of human trafficking by creating a platform for survivor-led advocacy, peer-to-peer mentorship, and empowerment that embraces all survivors, regardless of gender, age, nationality or type of trafficking experience. Members of the NSN include survivors from various backgrounds, spanning 23 countries, including Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Sri Lanka, Zambia, and the United States. Active members currently reside in over 32 states including Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and Washington D.C. The NSN's diverse membership makes it uniquely representative of the myriad of situations and dynamics experienced by survivors of human trafficking.

CAST Case Management Program

CAST has spent the last 18 years developing and implementing a comprehensive, trauma-informed and victim-centered Case Management Program for survivors of human trafficking. Utilizing an empowerment approach, CAST's Case Management Program provides a coordinated continuum of care to meet the emergency response and long-term needs of all types of human trafficking survivors living in Los Angeles County, and is uniquely designed to respond to the diverse needs of each individual survivor. Utilizing a 13-point assessment tool to ensure that the survivor's needs are being met, case managers go the extra mile to assist survivors with the basic necessities, training, and support that is needed to move from crisis to thriving. In addition, case managers provide life skills training, supportive counseling, and advocacy.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire of 20 questions was developed for the purpose of this study, titled the *Identification and Referral in Health Care Settings* survey.

Implementation

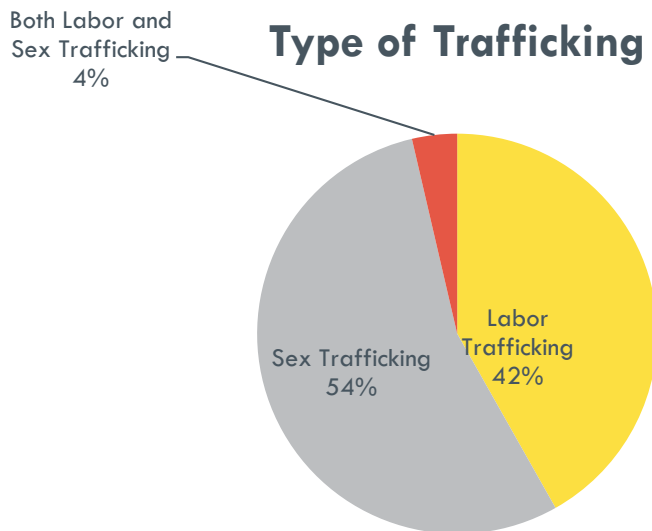
The survey was distributed to members of the NSN through a post on the NSN Facebook page in the Fall of 2016 where members were encouraged to complete the survey electronically. In addition, all current CAST case management clients were provided a paper version of the survey.

RESULTS

Respondents:

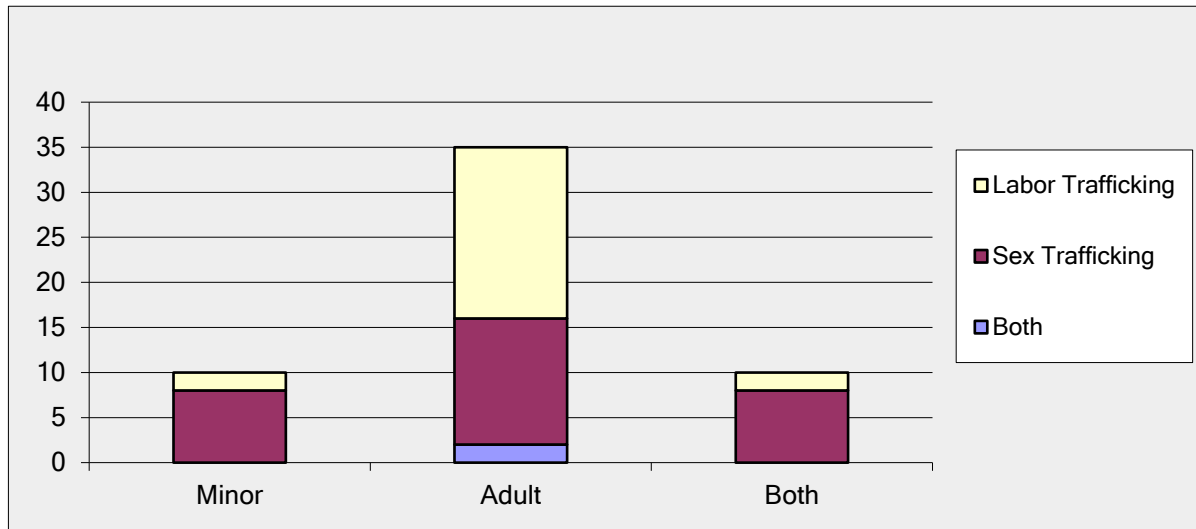
A total of 55 individuals responded to the *Identification and Referral in Health Care Settings* survey. More than half of the respondents were survivors of sex trafficking (54%), 42% of the respondents were survivors of labor trafficking, and 4% were survivors of both labor and sex trafficking. The majority of those who responded had been trafficked between 1 to 5 years (61.8%), and 20% had been trafficked for more than 5 years. 24 respondents identified California as the primary state where they were trafficked.

Chart 1: Type of Trafficking



The majority of the respondents indicated that they were trafficked as adults (63.6%). 18.2% indicated that they were trafficked when they were minors only, and another 18.2% indicated that they were trafficked while they were minors and into their adulthood.

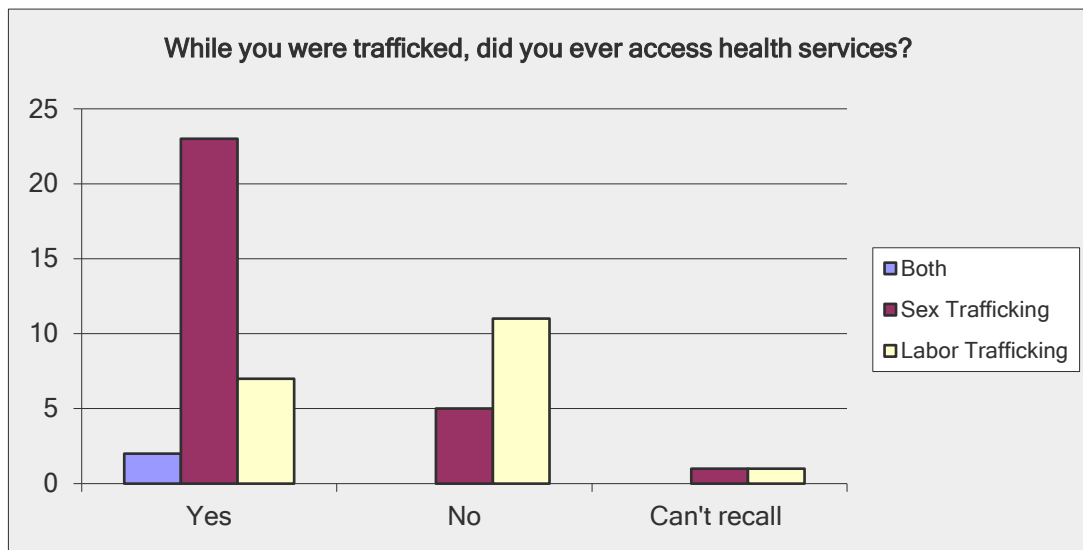
Chart 2: Age Category when Trafficked disaggregated by Type of Trafficking



Accessing Health Care Services while in Trafficking Situations:

Over half of the respondents indicated that they accessed health care services at least one time while in their trafficking situation (64%). Accessing health care services seemed to be more common for victims of sex trafficking when compared to victims of labor trafficking.

Chart 3: Question Result: *While you were trafficked, did you ever access health services?* Disaggregated by Type of Trafficking



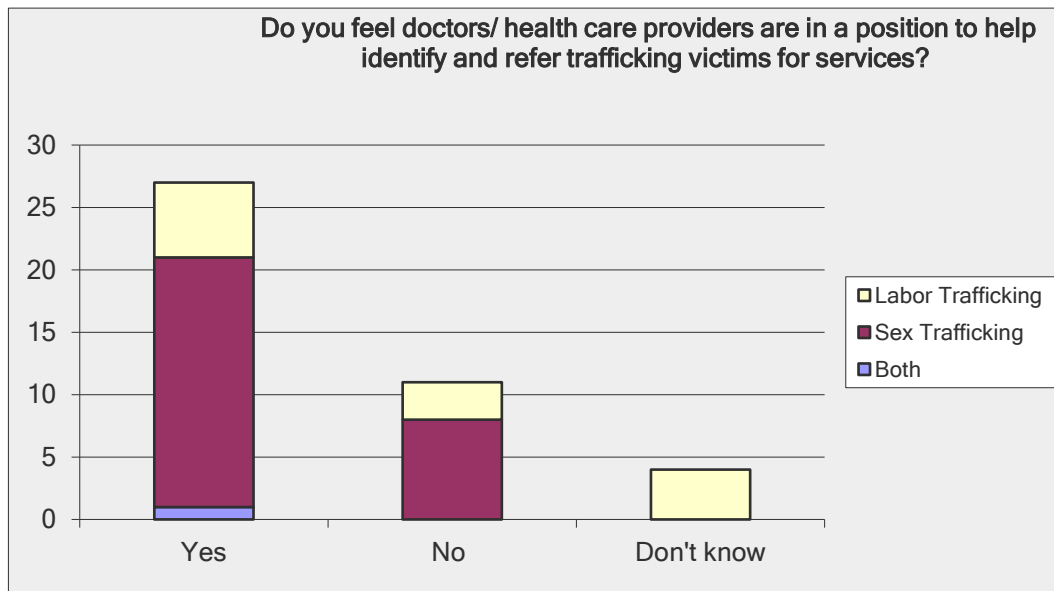
Out of the 64% of individuals who accessed health care while in their trafficking situation, 31.1% indicated accessing services at a community clinic. Many survivors also indicated visiting ER /County Hospitals and private doctor offices.

Identification and Referral by Health Care Providers:

An overwhelming 96.7% indicated that they had **never** been provided with information and/or resources about trafficking while visiting a doctor's office or health care provider. Only 1 respondent indicated that

they were identified by a health care provider as a victim of human trafficking. Despite this, 64.3% of respondents indicated that they believed health care providers are in a position to help identify and refer trafficking victims for services.

Chart 4: Question Result: Do you feel doctors/health care providers are in a position to help identify and refer trafficking victims for services?



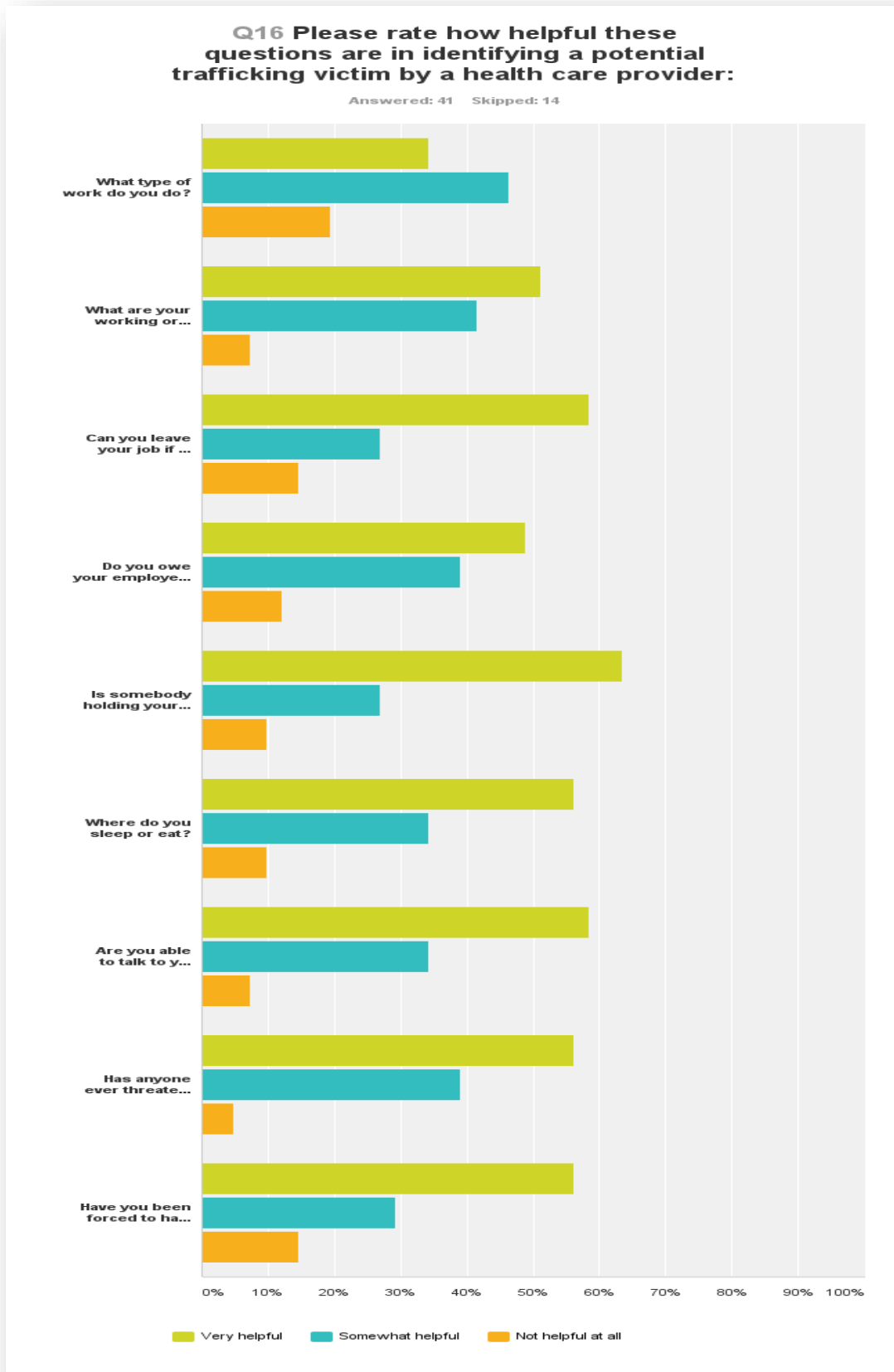
40% of respondents also indicated that there was something that his/her doctor could have said or done to help them while they were in their trafficking situation. Respondents provided suggestions/comments that fall within these themes:

- Ask screening questions: For example, *Are you safe? Who is hurting you? Are you happy? Do you want a different life for yourself?*
- Provide information and resources: Explain that there are places that can help, provide hotline number, and share resources.
- Providers' behaviors: Be kind, don't judge, establish rapport, say that it's ok to talk, say that it's safe
- Offer to Contact Authorities: Offer to call the authorities and keep them safe until police arrives

Respondents were asked to rate the helpfulness of the following questions, which are also currently provided to health care providers during CAST trainings to assist in identifying potential trafficking victims.

1. What type of work do you do?
2. What are your workings or living conditions like?
3. Can you leave your job if you want to?
4. Do you owe your employer money?
5. Is somebody holding your passport or ID?
6. Where do you sleep or eat?
7. Are you able to talk to your family/friends?
8. Has anyone ever threatened you or your family?
9. Have you been forced to have sex for money, food, shelter or other needs?

Chart 5: Question Results: Please rate how helpful these questions are in identifying a potential trafficking victim by a health care provider



When disaggregating the data based on type of trafficking, most labor trafficking survivors indicated question 5 (*Is somebody holding your passport or ID?*) as being very helpful, while question 9 (*Have you been forced to have sex for money, food, shelter or other needs?*) was identified as very helpful by most sex trafficking survivors. When reviewing the combined data, most questions were found to be somewhat to very helpful for all trafficking survivors. An additional questions that respondents suggested in order to assist in identifying a trafficking victim in a health care setting was: *Are you in the presence of someone who purposely intimidates you for their benefit?* Another respondent noted that the questions above were more appropriate for adults, and identified a need to develop more questions for minor victims.

An overwhelming 81.0% indicated that they had **never** been asked any of these questions.

Recommendations for health care providers:

Respondents provided the following recommendation to health care providers:

- Inform the patient that they have the right to speak alone with the doctor.
- Provide genuine care so that the trafficking victim knows they are worth being cared for.
- Inform the patient that there are resources that assist human trafficking victims and that help them get out of their situations.
- Other flags to look out for are if a patient can't answer questions about their physical being and/or history of prior procedures, aggressive behavior, terrified behavior, not wanting the health care provider to touch the patient.

SUMMARY

These survey results confirm existing studies that indicate trafficking victims, especially those who are victims of sex trafficking, will sometimes access health care services while they are in their trafficking situation. In addition, these survey results confirm that doctors and other health care providers are in a position to help victims of human trafficking through identification and providing resources, information, and referral. The survey results also confirm that the questions presented during trainings for identifying trafficking victims are helpful. The additional feedback regarding including more questions to increase identification of minor victims of trafficking will be incorporated into the trainings in order to ensure all types of trafficking victims are being identified. In addition, the survey results highlight the recommendation from survivors for health care providers to assess the way they treat their patients, ensuring that the doctor's office is a safe place and that their patients who may be victims of trafficking are treated with kindness.

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