

HTAB Minutes from 6/12/20 (held virtually due to COVID-19)

HTAB members in Attendance:

- Jennifer Montgomery, Chair
- Tiffanie Askew
- Kent Bauman
- Hannah Britton
- Hope Cooper
- Karen Countryman-Roswurm– by Allison Farres
- Hon. Marci Francisco
- Sec. Delia Garcia
- Rebekah Gaston
- Dorthy Stucky Halley
- Ed Howell
- Christine Kenney
- Ed Klumpp
- Deb Kluttz
- Michelle McCormick
- Sarah Oldridge
- Dr. Gianfranco Pezzino, MD
- Jeff Richards
- Diana Schunn
- Kirk Thompson
- Derrick Wilczek

Staff: AAG Sarah Shipman

Guests: Stacy Tidwell, Tyra Miles, Kelly Ralston, Justin Whitten, Julie Larson, Erin Bartling, Joe Reichold, James Johnson, Heather Angelinetta, Christine Ladner, Christine Kenney, Blake Shuart, Anne Ellis, Gillian Chadwick, Taylor Jorgensen, Kristin Tebow, Mark Masterson, Merideth Hogan

The meeting was called to order at 1:30pm and the Chair Jennifer Montgomery shared with the group the specific information about KOMA and KAPA compliance, as the Board is operating under the emergency declaration.

Item One: Approval of December 2019 minutes:

Motion made by: Ed Klumpp Seconded by: Ed Howell, Roll call vote: Minutes are approved and the motion passed unanimously.

Committee reports:

LE: The group last met in Feb. 2020 and discussed the juvenile protocol for law enforcement response. The group determined that many officers are not aware of juvenile protocol and formulated a plan of distributing the information. Specifically, KHP is working on a plan to provide info to their staff, Ed Klumpp will distribute to the law enforcement associations and the OAG will also distribute through their contact lists. Additionally, the group discussed the legislative proposals.

VS: Dorthy reports that the February meeting was cancelled due to Covid, and another meeting will be scheduled soon. She reported that the compiled 2019 HT statistics were sent to the group prior to the meeting. OAG Victim Services is working on the HTVAF grant process at this time. Additionally, Dorthy announced her retirement to the group and reported that the new Director of Victim Services, Michelle McCormick, will be taking over chair responsibilities for the subcommittee.

Jennifer recognized and applauded Dorthy's service to the HTAB and described her impact, as she was instrumental from the groups inception 10 years ago.

Public awareness and Prev: Jennifer reports this group has not met since Dec. She made a request for new committee members and asked those who are interested to reach out to her directly.

Agency reports:

KDOL: Secretary Garcia reports KDOL has been focused on the unemployment increases in the State, and also recognizes this may contribute to those “bad actors” who may take advantage of vulnerable people. They are monitoring this and working with a national group to keep on top of labor trafficking issues. Sec. Garcia introduced her staff member, Alexa Tapia who reported they recently met with Polaris about trends during Covid. Additionally, they will be ramping up workplace safety campaigns, and will include information for workers to know their rights about labor trafficking. KDOL will also resume the work on the digital campaign for labor trafficking in KS.

KBI: Heidi Lynch reported on behalf of Director Thompson that they have not received any calls requesting an “immediate response team” for juvenile victims this year. They have received 25 tips from Polaris and Heidi is doing the follow-up on behalf of the KBI.

DCF: Rebecca Gaston (policy and EES) reports that overall DCF is serving struggling families during Covid with a focus on food assistance and childcare. Kent Bauman reports specifically for HT response, that even though they are tele-working the staff is still seeing regular HT intakes. He reports, however, that everything has slowed due to Covid.

KDOC: Hope Cooper reported for KDOC that they too have challenges due to Covid, which has been the focus of resources. However, the KDOC IT staff are making progress in programming the HT screening tool and they anticipate completion and implementation soon.

Presentations:

Gillian Chadwick—Law Professor at Washburn University: Gillian reported on her experience in providing legal representation in other states and in Kansas for labor trafficking victims. She noted that labor trafficking tends to be underestimated. She reports that tracking is hard because there is often not a clear line between exploitive labor and trafficking. She described the legal remedies available to trafficking victims and also briefly discussed a case she is working on regarding a victim in Kansas City where the victim was awarded the single largest judgement by a single plaintiff for labor trafficking. (Links and presentation will be emailed to the Board). In answering questions, Gillian identified the overlap between sex and labor trafficking, especially as sexual coercion/harassment is used as a means to control and force labor.

Det. Latavia Allen (EMCU in Wichita): filling in for Det. Stephen Meyer. Detective Allen reports she has been working with juvenile HT victims since 2015. She reports that she and Det. Meyer made a list of the following challenges for LE when responding to these cases:

- a. There is often no plan of action for the victims, once they are picked up: with no quick action for residential or provider services, the victims often run again or return to the trafficking situation.
- b. The length of time to get helping services is too long: they cannot access therapy and mental health counseling, drug treatment or at times even medical care soon enough.

- c. Services providers are not always reporting runaways or clearing them when they return, leaving LE out of the loop when a victim has returned.
- d. Difficulties in collaboration with the providers: for example, if the Wichita Children’s Home is not taking a victim due to foster care placement, LEO or Detectives may sit with the victim for hours while waiting for provider to come pick them up.
- e. The victims often leave the staff secure facilities quickly, by just walking out.
 - i. CINC laws make it impossible to hold victim to secure placement for long enough to get them services. There are different interpretations between systems about how the CINC laws work, and this results in poor decisions being made.
 - ii. EMCU works with DCF partners—and all are making recommendations through the provider, but this does not seem to be making an impact, because victims often return.
- f. Detective Allen reports she has heard the following perspective from youth victims:
 - i. They know that the system isn’t working for them.
 - ii. They don’t like how they are treated by workers/professionals. For example, they have been promised things by workers and no follow through.
 - iii. They feel like they are not part of the plan and that their opinion does not matter.
 - iv. They are not having enough contact with case workers and only see them at court.
- g. Det. Allen reports that the lack of accountability for service providers and overall lack of services contributes to LE burnout on this issue.

Dianna Schunn, of the Board, asked what can be done to create change for this?

The Board revisited the conversation about regional staff secure facilities (SSF) and the possibility of moving this forward to get adequate services for child victims. It was suggested that the Board would also need to explore options where SSF may not be needed (i.e. family placement or others). The Board discussed how this was a significant task for this body, moving forward.

Taylor Jorgenson (DCF) /Kristin Tebow (KVC): Missing youth specialists

Taylor and Kristin described their roles and the scope of their work to find runaways in Kansas and how they engage with them to prevent running away again. They discussed multiple strategies for connection to earn the trust of the youth. Taylor reported that DCF has 70 kids “on run” right now statewide. They report that the majority are from foster care. Kristin described the KVC internal HT assessment process, as well as the statutory HT assessment that is requested by law enforcement, which compels the “immediate response team”. She reports, however, that there are still challenges as most of the youth they find, also run again. She described that she and her co-workers make recommendations, but that the case teams have to make the decisions about what happens to the youth. Kristin reports there is more accountability when the LE assessment is what is driving the referral, but they still need to improve this process.

Legislative update: None of the 2020 proposals made it through this session due to Covid’s impact on the Legislative session ending. HTAB will have to re-introduce the proposals next session, but the group will discuss this in future meetings.

Future Topics:

- Continue to look at labor trafficking
- Equality Model and other national models re: demand, charging victims, victims who perpetrate
- HT in the Native American and Indigenous populations

Jennifer Montgomery asked the Board for any additional suggestions for future meeting topics.

Next Meeting: Sept 11th, 2020 and Dec. 11th, 2020 (Unknown if in person or virtual)

Meeting adjourned at 3:10pm