

# Human Trafficking

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The Quiet Epidemic



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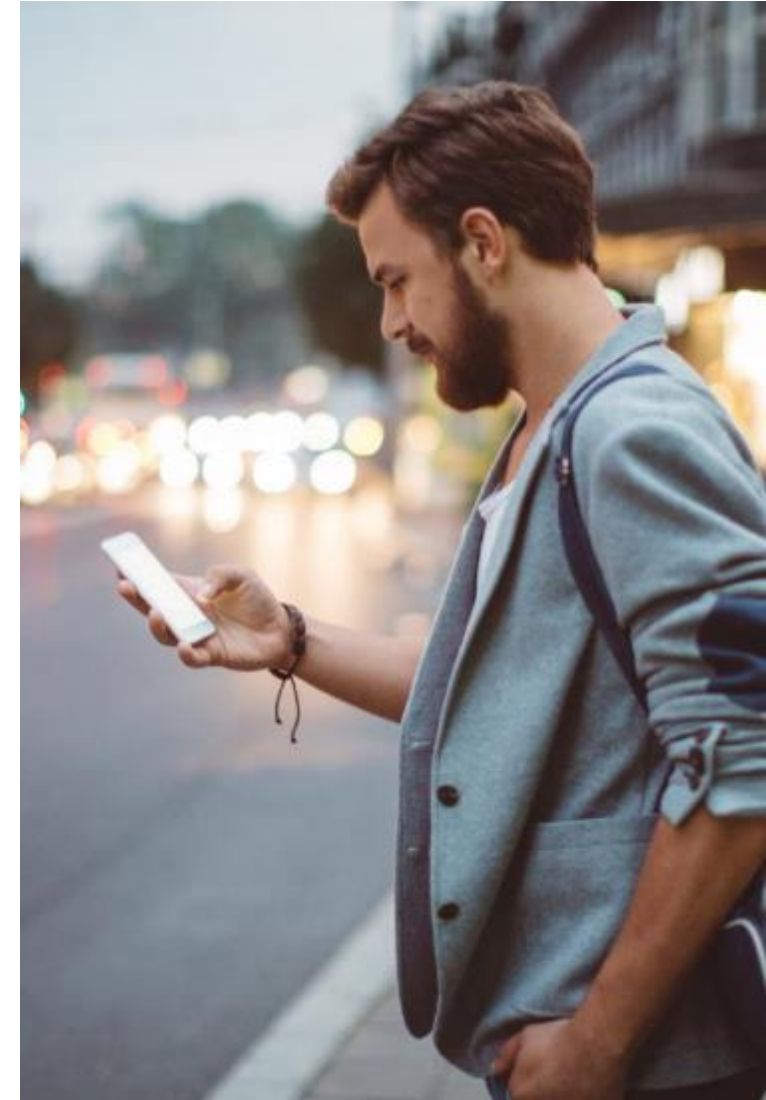
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# Objectives

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- ➔ What is human trafficking?
- ➔ Who are the traffickers?
- ➔ Who are the victims?
- ➔ As health care providers, how can you spot the signs of potential trafficking?
- ➔ What can we all do to prevent human trafficking?

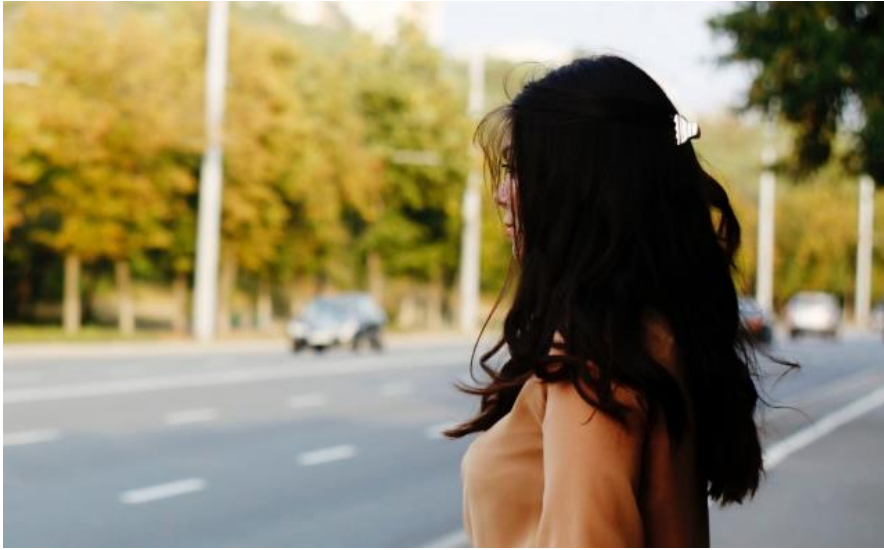




# What is human trafficking?



“The use of force, fraud or coercion to compel a person into commercial sex acts or labor against his or her will.” The one exception involves minors and commercial sex. Inducing a minor into commercial sex is considered human trafficking regardless of the presence of force, fraud or coercion.



## Trafficking Facts

A multi-billion dollar criminal industry that affects nearly 25 million people around the world.

100,000 children are trafficked each year for sex.

Not always strangers: traffickers can be romantic partners/spouses, parents, other family members

Not just sex for hire: porn, restaurants, cleaning services, construction, factories, farming, landscaping, nails salons, and more

Not just female. As many as half of victims are male.

Why not run? Held against their will, fears for safety, threats to family, no safe place to live, or because they have been so effectively manipulated they do not identify as victims.

# Iowa By The Numbers

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## Top 5 Sex Trafficking Venues

1. Illicit massage/spa business
2. Hotel/motel based
3. Residence-based commercial sex
4. Escort services
5. Pornography

## Top 2 Labor Trafficking Venues

1. Traveling sales crews
2. Agriculture

## Types of Trafficking

1. Sex trafficking
2. Sex and labor
3. Labor Trafficking
4. Trafficking type not specified

# RECRUITMENT METHODS



**ALL  
CHILDREN  
ARE VULNERABLE.**

## COMMON METHODS OF RECRUITMENT INCLUDE:



MEETING THE NEED FOR  
FOOD, CLOTHING, SHELTER



PROMISES OF ROMANCE,  
LOVE, ACCEPTANCE



OFFERS OF  
INDEPENDENCE,  
LUXURY ITEMS, CASH



FLATTERY, LIES,  
MANIPULATION



EXPLOITING POSITION OF AUTHORITY



EXPLOITING  
VULNERABILITY  
OR DESPERATION





# Who are the victims?

**It can happen to anyone, but some are more vulnerable**

Traffickers exploit:

recent migration or relocation, substance abuse, mental health concerns, victims with special health care needs, involvement in the child welfare system and being a runaway or homeless youth.

**How do they control victims?**

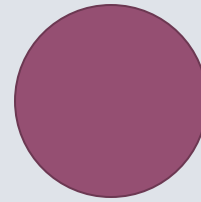
- Physical and emotional abuse, threats
- Isolation from friends and family
- Economic abuse
- Psychological trauma, shame, emotional attachment, threats to themselves or family.



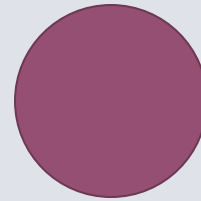


# Are human trafficking victims in my ED?

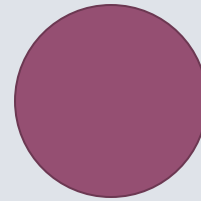
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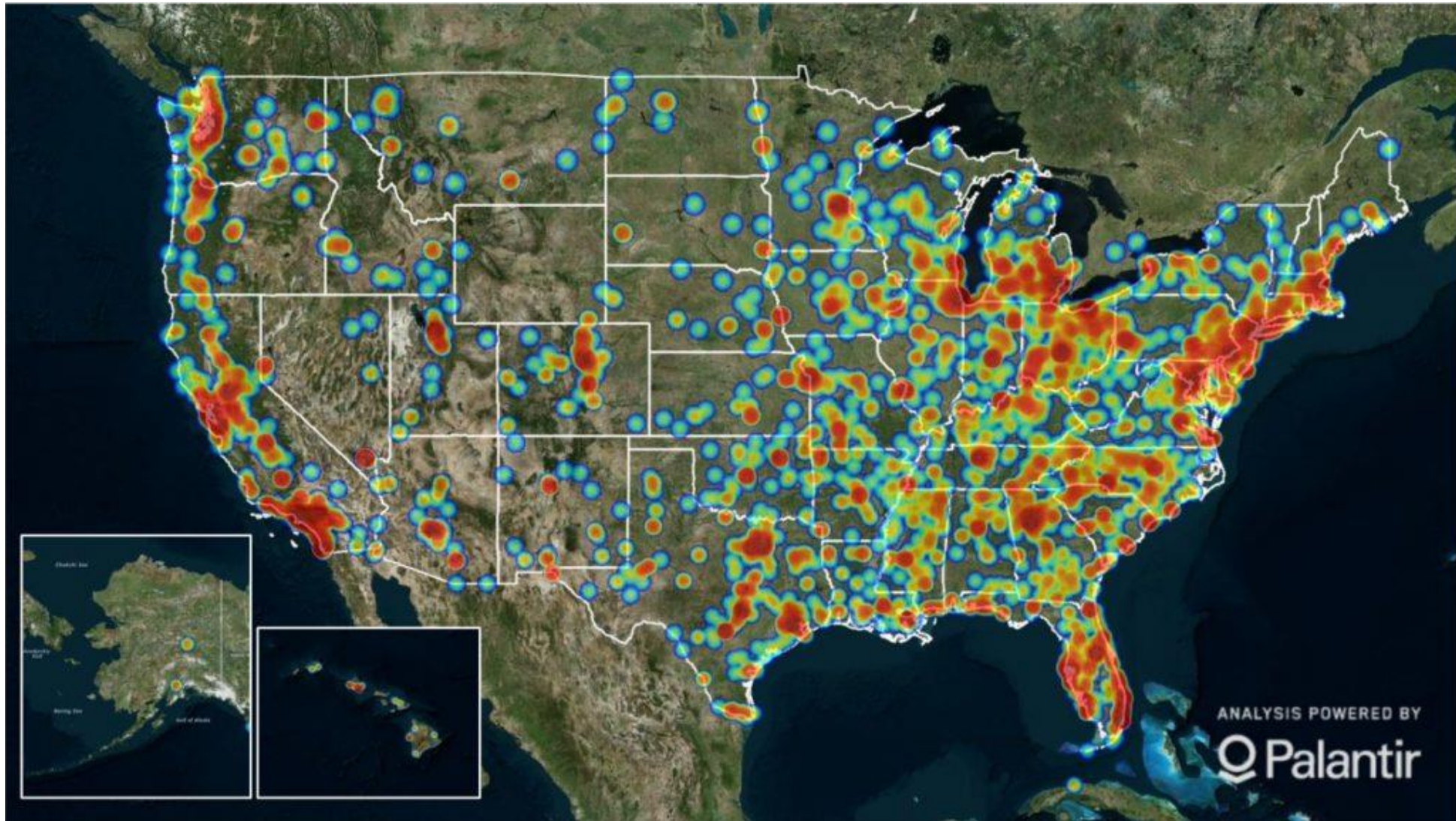
As many as 85% of victims had contact with a health care professional while being trafficked



More than 60% reported going to a hospital or emergency department



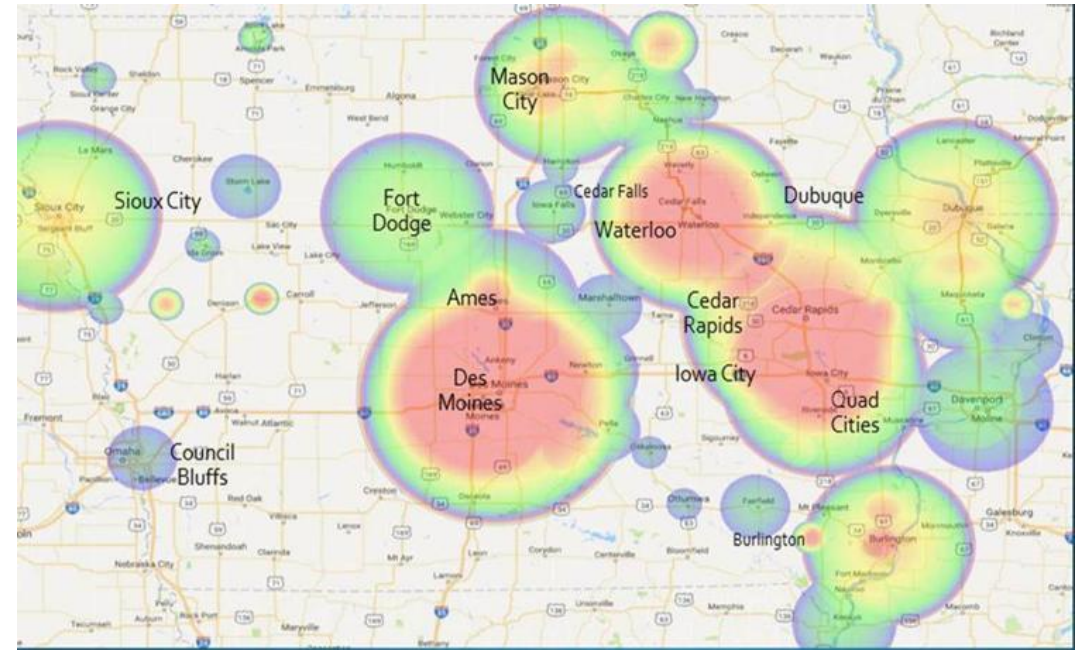
Yet a survey of 500 physicians showed few than 10% suspected they'd encountered a trafficked person, and only 20% knew what to do if they did.



Locations of Human Trafficking Situations in 2019



# Hot spots in Iowa



Creighton Human Trafficking Initiative: Numbers of individuals advertised on backpage, an online platform linked to human trafficking.

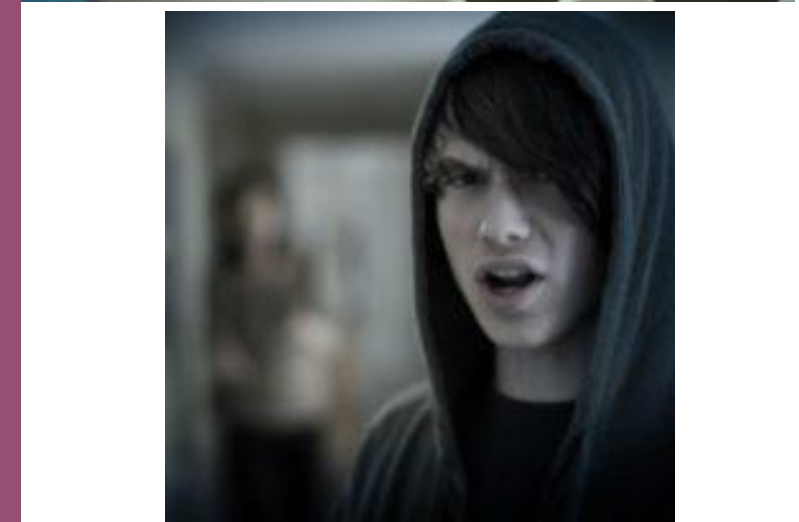




# Know the Signs: Sex Trafficking

## A victim may:

- Appear malnourished, have poor physical or dental health
- Show signs of new and/or old physical injuries and abuse, especially those that can be hidden
- Have a history of repeated pregnancies or sexually transmitted diseases
- Be inappropriately dressed
- Pay cash and have no health insurance
- Avoid eye contact, social interaction and authority figures/law enforcement
- Not know the city they are in, or their address
- Have an adult present that speaks for them, or respond with answers that seem scripted
- Have tattoos implying ownership
- Lie about their age, lack official identification documents
- Show signs of addiction or withdrawal
- Flat affect, anger, depression



# Know the Signs: Labor Trafficking



- Musculoskeletal and ergonomic injuries
- Malnutrition, Dehydration
- Lack of routine screening and preventive care
- Poor dental hygiene
- Untreated skin infections
- Injuries or illness from exposure to chemicals/unsafe water
- Vision complaints
- Anxiety/panic attacks (e.g. SOB, chest pain)
- Overly vigilant behavior
- Inability/aversion to making decisions independent of employer
- Inability/aversion to speaking without an interpreter
- Affect dysregulation/irritability

# Impact of Trauma



## PTSD

- Recurrent thoughts/reliving the event
- Recurrent nightmares/trouble sleeping
- Feeling detached/withdrawn behavior
- Easily startled/unable to concentrate

## Memory Disruption

- Decreased/disjointed memory
- Inability to recall traumatic events accurately
- Memories triggered by related sensory information

## Trauma Bonding

- Loyalty and concern for trafficker
- Unwillingness to report or testify
- Returning to trafficker





# What can you do?

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Ask questions, be trauma-informed, encourage person to report, report your own suspicions  
Prepare your staff!

**Separate patient  
from  
companion(s),  
treat medical  
concerns, then  
ask questions like:**

- Are you hungry?
- Where are you living? Who do you live with?
- Do you live, work and sleep in the same place?
- Have you ever been forced to do work you didn't want to do?
- Does anyone hold your identity documents for you? (Driver's license, passport , etc.)
- Are you working to pay off a debt?
- Do you feel safe?
- Are you afraid of your employer?
- Have you been forced to have sex when you didn't want to?

You are assessing the need for emergency services only.  
Take care not to re-traumatize them with your questions.

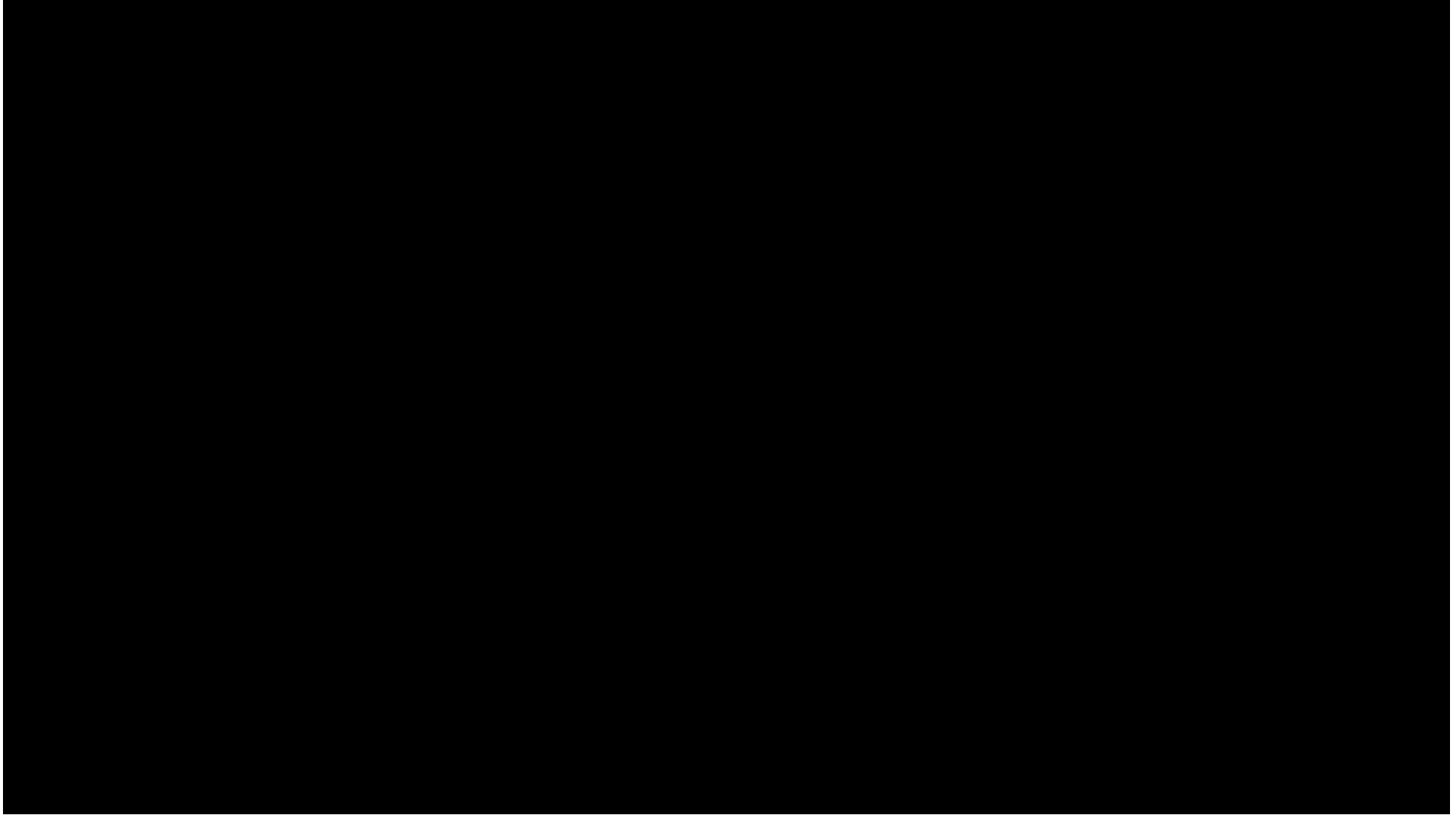
## Consider:

- Is the patient in immediate danger?
- Is the patient a minor?
- Does the patient want help?
- Is there an immediate security issue?

**When in doubt, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline for assistance and next steps.**

As always:

Follow your own protocols, HIPAA laws and mandatory reporting requirements.



# Resources

## National Human Trafficking Hotline

1 (888) 373-7888

(200 languages)

Or Text BEFREE to 233733



## 911

For those who may be in immediate danger



## Iowa Victim Service Call Center

800-770-1650

Or Text IOWAHELP to 20121



## More Information

End Slavery, Iowa  
(Shelters, trafficking, domestic/sexual abuse, homicide survivors)

Polaris Project

Truckers Against Trafficking

# Citations

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## **Photo and Content Credits Include:**

Humantraffickinghotline.org

Center for a Non-Violent Community

John T. Floyd Law Firm

Operation Underground Railroad

Montgomery Advertiser

Canopy Children's Solutions

Empowering Parents

Video: YouTube, "MSP Look Again"

AMA

Polaris Project

Physicians Against the Trafficking of Humans

Department of Health and Human Services Office on Trafficking in Persons

Andrea Benson

Markie Dell

Harford Courant

Sioux City Journal

Creighton Human Trafficking Initiative

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

End Slavery, Iowa

Anna Brewer

Againstourwill.org

Kelly Patterson

National Human Trafficking Resource Center

Truckers Against Trafficking

North Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force