Framework for a Human Trafficking Protocol in Health Care Settings

**Patient Accesses Health Care Services**

**Consider these Red Flags***:
- Someone else is speaking for the patient
- Patient is not aware of his/her location, the current date, or time
- Patient exhibits fear, anxiety, PTSD, submission, or tension
- Patient shows signs of physical/sexual abuse, medical neglect, or torture
- Patient is reluctant to explain his/her injury

**If any of these red flags are present, discuss with the patient:**
- Speak with the patient alone
- Bring in a social worker or advocate whenever possible
- Use a professional, neutral interpreter if needed

1. Have you been forced to engage in sexual acts for money or favors?
2. Is someone holding your passport or identification documents?
3. Has anyone threatened to hurt you or your family if you leave?
4. Has anyone physically or sexually abused you?
5. Do you have a debt to someone you cannot pay off?
6. Does anyone take all or part of the money you earn?

**If YES to any of the above questions or if other indicators of human trafficking are present:**
Call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) hotline at 1-888-373-7888
Ask for assistance with assessment and next steps (following all HIPAA & mandatory reporting regulations)
The NHTRC Hotline is a confidential hotline, is operated 24/7, and has access to 200+ languages

**If NO to above questions:**
Refer to local social services as appropriate

**Assessment of Potential Danger**
The NHTRC can assist in assessing the current level of danger. Be attentive to the immediate environment for safety concerns and follow hospital protocols if there are safety threats. Questions to consider:
- Is the trafficker present?
- What does the patient believe will happen if they do not return?
- Does the patient believe anyone else (including family) is in danger?
- Is the patient a minor?

**If there is perceived danger and the patient wants help:**
Discuss with the Hotline next steps. You may need to involve law enforcement for victim safety. The NHTRC can assist in determining sensitive law enforcement contacts.

**No perceived danger:**
The NHTRC can help determine next steps and referrals.

**Local Resources:**
Refer to existing community resources included in a response protocol as needed, as the NHTRC may not have all local referrals in their database. If there is no current response protocol in place, consider establishing one.

*For more red flags and indicators see the NHTRC’s Comprehensive Assessment Tool and Identifying Victims of Human Trafficking document for health care providers.

**Report Online or Access**

**Resources & Referrals:** [www.traffickingresourcecenter.org](http://www.traffickingresourcecenter.org)
**Call:** 1-888-373-7888 (24/7) **Email:** nhtrc@polarisproject.org

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