



# HUMAN TRAFFICKING COMMISSION

## OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

### MEETING MINUTES

March 1, 2023 | 10 a.m.-11 a.m.

---

1. Welcome and introduction – Linda Majeska Powers
  - i. HTC meeting will be brief in that an 11 a.m. press conference is planned for the official roll-out of the Health Care Training Videos created by the HTC Health Care Subcommittee and Mount Carmel Health Care Systems.
  - ii. Attorney General Yost is attending the HTC meeting before the press conference.
  - iii. Jomel Spurlock is resigning from the HTI. Two positions will be posted by the Attorney General’s Office. Interested HTC members or their recommended candidates are encouraged to apply.
2. Jomel Spurlock introduced discussions regarding spring Advisory Council nominations, as current Ambassador terms are ending.
  - i. Linda Powers said she was approached at the HT Summit by many people interested in becoming Ambassadors.
  - ii. Linda Powers suggested that, because more individuals are expected to apply for the Ambassador positions, a Steering Committee consisting of subcommittee chairs and one current Ambassador review the applications for appointment – as the subcommittee chairs work closely with the Ambassadors. Members were asked whether they have any objections to an application review steering committee; no objections were noted.
  - iii. Linda Powers encouraged current Ambassadors to stay active and mentor the new Ambassador class.
  - iv. Jomel Spurlock said HTI is meeting with each current Ambassador to gain input and review changes to come for the new Ambassador class.
3. Advisory Council Ambassadors Updates
  - i. There were no updates from Ambassadors.
4. Subcommittee Updates
  - i. Healthcare Subcommittee – Heather Wilde

- i. Discussed updates with two filmed scenarios for healthcare education (survivor at the hospital for labor and delivery, familial trafficking with minor victim presenting at healthcare facility) and working with the publications department at the OAG. Videos will be released today with press release at Mount Carmel. Discussion and pause points have been built into the educational videos. Debrief guide was created.  
Subcommittee's goal is to create two more educational videos spotlighting labor trafficking and EMS first line responder's interaction with human trafficking. The EMS video will include identification of HT survivors and intersectionality with hospital staff of various disciplines.
  - ii. Projects for 2023 remain focused on creating a safe avenue for victims/survivors to relay to their medical provider that they are not OK or safe. Work has begun on the creation of a tool for survivors coming into a healthcare system to express to a nurse "I am not safe," whether the situation involves human trafficking or domestic violence – because it all overlaps. The tool will be simple and straightforward, for victims who cannot read.
- ii. Law Enforcement Subcommittee – Jomel Spurlock, speaking on behalf of Matt Hilbert, updated the commission.
    - i. The subcommittee last met in January, when members discussed a few cases across the state. Members are also currently discussing a youth human trafficking tool that Larry McCoy shared from BCI with the team.
    - ii. The subcommittee has not been able to meet since, but it expects to meet again in early April 2023.
- iii. Victims Services Subcommittee – Michelle Hannon
    - i. Opening of another standards survey. The survey will be opened every quarter, so the next opening date will be around April 1, 2023.
      1. From the last opening through this February, we had an additional 37 new responses, including some seemingly from individuals who were looking around to get a lay of the land; they did not complete all 11 standards. Nineteen completed the entire survey process. The subcommittee met Feb. 28, 2023, and examined a follow-up plan. It is developing communication strategies for reaching out to these service agencies so they know where they stand in the process of meeting the standards. The survey tool itself will take you through the process, but we learned from the first standards that not everyone followed the math and perhaps left that first

round without understanding whether or not they had passed the standards. Thus, the committee wants to talk about a way to communicate regardless – perhaps say “Congratulations” or “Thanks for participating” and/or encourage an agency to connect a subcommittee member who can help identify ways to strengthen the areas in which the agency didn’t meet the standards.

2. The subcommittee plans to connect next week to work on the standards communications with Rebekkah and Michelle and to continue encouraging agencies to meet the standards. Meeting with the Attorney General’s Office in early March to determine who is responsible for setting up the service matrix. We are getting much closer to being online and available.

iv. Demand Reduction – Tony Talbott

- i. The subcommittee met nine times this year and discussed the concept of demand reduction, the benefits, misuse of demand reduction, what does demand reduction mean or look like for both sex and labor trafficking, reviewed materials from programs and gave feedback, and collected resources internationally, nationally and locally on demand reduction.
- ii. The subcommittee has created a six-module slide segment on demand reduction that can be shared and plugged into any presentation. Final draft of the 101 Demand Reduction Drop-In presentation guide will be completed in the next few days. Human Trafficking Demand Reduction is fairly new and complex, deserving of an intense approach that goes into detail on every slide and sometimes almost every word on a slide. The committee agonized over each slide, wanting to be as clear and concise as possible and ensure that the information is victim-centered, victim-informed, survivor-informed, trauma-informed and comprehensive. The subcommittee didn’t want to inadvertently harm or show support for “johns.” It wanted to be narrow, incarceration only or to utilize determinative approaches. Demand reduction for sex trafficking and labor trafficking must comprehensively address buyer behavior, social norm, law, policy, and protect victims as well as victim rights and human rights. The subcommittee is on a final draft and has something to share with the HTI folks and others – to get input. The subcommittee is meeting monthly to work on this project.
- iii. The white paper on demand from the previous administration is being updated and will be ready in 2023.

v. Public Awareness – Lara Wilken

- i. The subcommittee completed its first project, Best Practices HT 101 Training Guide. It had seven peer reviews and a survivor-informed review. The Victim Services Subcommittee chair and the Demand Reduction Subcommittee chair also peer-reviewed the guide.
- ii. Goals for 2023 at this time:
  1. Create a best practices HT 101 training guide specific for youth presentations, so service agencies know what to include. Both guides will be survivor-informed and evidence-based and will include resources. Peer reviewers are welcome.
  2. Create an awareness flyer – including tear-offs with a local number for victims to call for help – for placement in public restrooms within communities. Peer reviewers of the flyer are welcome.
  3. Develop a survey to send to committee chairs, who would then send it to their group, to help us get a strong understanding of the actual education and work that is being provided throughout the state of Ohio. Then, at the 2024 Human Trafficking Summit, perhaps we can state how many presentations were created and presented by HTC members. The subcommittee also wants to develop an Ohio map showing where the education is being provided so that it can identify gaps in education so it can develop a strategy to fill those gaps.

vi. Research, Data & Gap Analysis – Kirsti Mouncey

- i. The subcommittee's goal is to continue to promote the recommendations established in the 2019 prevalence study and the 2021-22 Formal Report on Data Collection Practices and Findings on Human Trafficking in Ohio created by the subcommittee. These recommendations will greatly impact the data being collected.
- ii. The subcommittee has continued work on Evelyn's data as well as vulnerability data. Christy Bartman, a member of the team, has done amazing work on vulnerability.
- iii. The subcommittee is trying to bring more researchers into the subcommittee to help members understand what they're doing statewide and where there might be an overlap of data collection.

- iv. The project of present is how the subcommittee can assist in collecting data on prevalence, what that would look like and who needs to be involved. The subcommittee does have a proposal into the AGO team to look at what it proposed regarding prevalence data collection. The group is hoping to launch a pilot in one Ohio county, with statewide expansion possible thereafter.

vii. Legal and Legislative – Samantha Salamon

This subcommittee is focusing on three goals for this year:

- I. The expungement bill – yes, the group is going after this again.
- II. A Shared Hopes goal of 6.5, as it pertains to education in schools.
- III. Homelessness and lack of funding for housing designated for survivors.

- i. The Legal and Legislative Subcommittee is working with the Healthcare Subcommittee to see what is needed legislatively to improve healthcare response to trafficking. Active recruitment of legislators to attend HTC meetings is continuing.
- ii. The subcommittee’s meetings are scheduled for the third Thursday of the month from noon to 1 p.m. The next meeting will be March 16, 2023 on Zoom. Send Kirsti an email message if you would like to receive a link to the meeting.

5. General HTI updates – Jomel Spurlock

- i. Linda Powers is the new Legal Director for HTI.
  - ii. Jomel Spurlock is leaving HTI.
1. Update on Human Trafficking Summit, which took place on Jan. 26, 2023. The summit was a success, with a combined 947 people attending in-person and virtually. Great feedback, too. We honored our outgoing Ambassadors. Jomel and Linda were separately in touch with the keynote speaker, who was overjoyed with what he experienced and impressed with the work being done in Ohio. Thank you to those who attended and/or participated, and the AGO looks forward to future summits.
  2. As of January 2023, Ambassadors will be paid (as a registered vendor). They will receive a 1099 at year’s end and can select direct deposit. If you’re a subcommittee chair with an Ambassador serving on your panel, let them know to register. Registration details and other related information were sent to each Ambassador.

3. Ambassador nomination/application forms are being updated to allow self-nomination. There was a lot of interest from attendees at the summit. For the Ambassadors who are with us now, the Attorney General's HTI hopes that you remain involved to serve as mentors for the new class.
  4. Feedback from Ambassadors is needed. HTI wants to make sure we are being intentional and moving the ball forward with this program. For those of you who haven't yet met with HTI, a meeting will be scheduled to get that feedback.
6. Carol O'Brien, the AG's 'Chief of Law Enforcement, addressed the HTC:

AG Yost sent a letter to Polaris on behalf of 52 state Attorneys General after HTI submitted comments to the AG outlining their concerns. The Attorney Generals did not address survivor self-reporting tips; they addressed third-party tips made to the Polaris hotline. The concern is not self-reporting, which the Attorneys General understand; they are looking at that from a victim-informed, trauma-informed approach and will accede to a survivor's wishes. As for third-party tips, though, the AGs are asking that Polaris report those to states immediately. The concern is that Polaris receives a tip from third parties and isn't forwarding them to local jurisdictions, as Polaris assumed a survivor wouldn't consent to that third-party tip being relayed to local law enforcement for investigation. Tracking down these third-party tips requires a timely report from Polaris by the states.

7. Attorney General Dave Yost addressed the Commission:

He thanked the commission and Ambassadors for their courage, resilience and persistence, and indicated that he is excited about the projects coming out of the commission. Specifically, he mentioned a project focused on medical professional training, and said he was astounded to learn that 88% of trafficking survivors seek medical care at one point. He addressed the complicated issue of "safe touchpoints," noting that law enforcement stings aren't ideal as safe touchpoints for survivor interaction. He is glad that social-service agencies offer assistance during stings but isn't sure that's the best place for addressing safety – so he's really excited about having some medical professionals in the ER who are trained in trauma and recognizing HT victims. He offered recognition/appreciation of those who worked on the healthcare videos.

AG Yost also recognized the work of Jomel Spurlock, presenting her with a signed HTI poster from the Attorney General's Office.

8. Upcoming Trainings and Developments – Group
- i. Two Days in May: May 8-9, 2023
  - ii. Courtney Schmackers: Ono May 20, 2023, She Has A Name is hosting a family education day related to human trafficking and demand reduction and is looking for care providers who are active with the youth demographic. The event will feature

activities appropriate for ages 3-6, 7-9, 10-13 and 14-16. The activities will encompass tactile play through music and movement to help youth become aware of trafficking and report it when they see it among their peers.

- iii. Michelle Hannon: The Victim Services Committee is really committed to helping all providers in the state get access to “no cost” trainings that are required to meet state standards. Location availability is no barrier.
  - iv. Lara Wilken: Bowling Green is hosting a public and allied health symposium on April 6, 2023. The topic will be human trafficking and how it impacts all of us in a professional lens. Ambassador Annette Mango, Healthcare Chair Heather Wilde and a survivor parent will present at this symposium. Registration is open, and attendance can be in-person or virtual. The symposium is free, with lunch provided. Continuing Education credits will be available for various professions.
  - v. Ambassador Annette Mango: She expressed the need for temporary and permanent housing for survivors so they can exit and remain out of the life. Old buildings, old hospitals would work, she said. She also addressed the need for funding in this area.
  - vi. Kathleen from Rainbow Babies Hospital: She supported Annette’s statements. Rainbow Babies Hospital currently has a youth survivor of trafficking in its facility and had another last week. There is no place to house them. We have more resources for adults, but our youth are being sent to juvenile detention to receive continued services – which shouldn’t be happening. These kids need a safe place to receive services even if they might not be ready. There’s just no place for them to go; Rainbow Babies is currently keeping a young survivor because there’s no safe place for her to go. It doesn’t want them to be lost in the system, and they shouldn’t be placed in a locked facility. The kids want help, but they’re manipulated in detention and just take off again.
  - vii. Linda Powers – Chairs please include me in your emails and meeting invites, as they are currently going exclusively to Jomel Spurlock.
9. In attendance: Heather Wilde, Julia Wike, Jomel Spurlock, Jennifer Sherfield, Sue Pohler, Lara Wilken, Veronica Scherbauer, Michelle Hanon, Stephanie Rollin, Annette Mango, Courtney Schmackers, Kirsti Mouncey, Gwen England, Tony Talbot, Linda Powers, Carol O’Brien, Dave Yost, Katie Blankemeyer, Michelle Hannan, Harold D’Souza, Christi Bartman, Maria Busch, Veronica Scherbauer, Tony Talbott, Lara Wilken, Jennifer Taber, Heather Wilde, Larry Henderhan, Ruth Downing, Samantha Salamon, Steve Irwin, Seth Boughton, Ryan Emahiser, Chassidy Barham, Stephanie Rollins, Harold D’Souza, Maria Busch, Catie Cleveland, Becca Peckinpugh, Erin Meyer, Jill Jackson, Laura Kaiser, Mary Kate Waggoner, Ruth Downing, Alicia Wolf, Christi Bartman, Kathleen Hackett, Rosa Beltre, Jennifer Tscholl, Margaret Kane, Kathleen (call-in from Rainbow Babies Hospital).