

February 24, 2016

Dear Canadian Federation of Medical Students,

Re: Educating Canadian Medical Students about Human Trafficking

I am writing this letter in support of the initiative to incorporate human trafficking education into Canadian medical school curricula, but with some additional comments outlined below. I am aware of the six core competencies outlined by the Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS) Global Health Program, and believe that human trafficking relates specifically to four of them: health implications of travel, migration and displacement; social and economic determinants of health; globalization of health and healthcare; and, human rights in healthcare.

As a faculty member at McMaster University and Co-Lead of the VEGA (Violence, Evidence, Guidance, Action) Project: A Public Health Response to Family Violence, I consider educating future healthcare providers on human trafficking to be essential to their education regarding global health matters and their future responsibilities as well informed healthcare professionals and also as global citizens. I wish to support your CFMS initiative, but also suggest that education about human trafficking needs to be linked to education about violence and exploitation generally. Future health professionals must be well informed about human trafficking and have training in evidence-based approaches to assess and address the health care needs of patients who are potential trafficking victims. Healthcare professionals also need to be informed about appropriate referrals to assist victims of human trafficking in receiving necessary resources in addition to health care.

In discussions with Dr. Mark Hanson, the Education Lead for VEGA, and Head of Undergraduate Medicine Admissions and Student Finances at the University of Toronto, he has indicated his eagerness to meet with representatives from CFMS to discuss how VEGA's work, which is funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, could intersect with this initiative on human trafficking.

In summary, I write in full support of the initiative to incorporate education about human trafficking into Canadian medical school curricula, and hope that representatives of the CFMS would be willing to meet with Dr. Hanson to discuss how this intersects with other important aspects of education that requires the involvement of healthcare providers to help effectively identify and support victims exposed to violence.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harriet MacMillan". The script is cursive and fluid.

Harriet MacMillan, MD, MSc, FRCPC
Professor, Departments of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences, and of Pediatrics
Chedoke Health Chair in Child Psychiatry