Doctors uniquely suited to help human trafficking victims

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Staff News Writer

Physicians during the 2015 AMA Annual Meeting identified a major global human rights and health issue they believe can be partially addressed in the health care setting: human trafficking.

A staggering 12.3 million adults and children are enslaved in human trafficking around the world at any given time, according to the United Nations’ International Labor Organization. The AMA Monday adopted policy to help address this growing epidemic.

The policy calls for physician education so they can identify and report suspected cases of human trafficking to the appropriate authorities while ensuring victims have the medical, legal and social resources they need.

“We must do everything we can to help get victims of human trafficking to safety,” AMA Board of Trustees Member William E. Kobler, MD, said in a statement. “Since we know that victims of human trafficking rarely seek help out of fear of their captors or law enforcement, we believe that the health care setting is an ideal way to engage with suspected victims and get them the help and resources they so desperately need.”