



# American Academy of Nursing

*transforming health care policy and practice through nursing knowledge*

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## **American Academy of Nursing Releases Policy Brief on Nurses Response to Human Trafficking**

*Human Trafficking is a Serious Public Health Emergency*

**Washington, D.C. (November 29, 2018)** — The American Academy of Nursing (Academy) today released its policy brief on the nursing response to human trafficking. An estimated 12 to 30 million people are trafficked and exploited for labor or sex, which represents a major public health emergency “resulting in poor immediate, intermediate, and long-term health outcomes” for the victim. During a given year, 85% of trafficked persons will have access to health care providers. Nurses, as frontline health providers, are critical to: identifying trafficked victims; promoting of physical, mental, and cognitive health; developing and implementing practice guidelines and research for health care; and advocating public policy initiatives on local, state, national, and international levels.

The Academy’s policy brief, “Policy brief on the nursing response to human trafficking,” was published in the July/August 2018 issue of the Academy’s journal, *Nursing Outlook*.

“The Academy supports the importance of nurses as frontline health providers in assessing and treating human trafficking victims,” said Academy President Karen Cox, PhD, RN, FAAN. “Human trafficking is a public health crisis that will need more forensically trained nurses to help identify and treat victims.”

The Academy promotes the inclusion of forensically trained nurses, and nursing workforce development, with expertise in human trafficking on: private business boards, task forces, non-profit service organizations, commercial bank boards, working groups, and governmental and other task forces and committees that may influence health policy related to human trafficking and advocate for justice for its victims. The Academy supports closing legislation and regulation gaps, including the gap in Title X practice guidelines to “formally include sex-trafficking of adolescents as child sex abuse, reportable under all state and territory statutes.” The Academy supports having a forensically trained nurse 24/7/365 available in all emergency departments to work with the identification, treatment, and rescue of human trafficking victims presented for care. The Academy also advocates for continued funding and appropriations for the legislative initiatives resulting from the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act, and The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA).

**For the full list of recommendations, please read the full policy brief: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2018.06.004>**

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