

Officials: Suspected prostitution leads to search at business

Trista Thurston May 4, 2017

LANCASTER - Police executed a search warrant at a local massage studio with the reported potential for human trafficking Thursday.

The Major Crimes Unit, along with Lancaster Police and the Bureau of Criminal Investigation with the Ohio Attorney General's office, collected evidence from the Acupressure Tuina Studio after an investigation showed suspected prostitution and potentially human trafficking at the business, officials reported.

"We have been aware of its existence here for a few months," Major Crimes Unit Commander Dennis Lowe said. "Based on what we've learned to this point, there was certainly reason to execute our warrant."

No arrests were made, though officers reported they did find one woman inside the 616 Forest Rose Ave. location.

"The woman we encountered today is from China," Lowe said.

Investigators need to determine the woman's legal status in the United States, how she got here, and where she has been staying. Lowe said the woman might have been living inside the business.

In similar situations, a business is opened, and a woman is brought to the country in exchange for providing sexual services, though this may not necessarily be the case in this situation, Lowe said.

Patrons are thought to have frequently been coming from locations outside of Lancaster, which is the case in similar circumstances.

"We don't want this kind of activity in our community," Lowe said.

The investigation is still ongoing.