



April 12, 2005

REPORT 05-13

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE FEDERAL CO-CHAIRMAN
 ARC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
 ARC GENERAL COUNSEL

SUBJECT: Survey Report – Review of Selected Health Providers and
 J-1 Visa Waiver Physicians in Mississippi

BACKGROUND

This review was undertaken as part of a survey of J-1 Visa Waiver program operations in the Appalachian Region.

The J-1 Visa Waiver program provides a waiver of the requirement for a foreign physician to return to his/her home country after completion of medical training in the United States. The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) participates as a Federal Entity sponsor to assist Appalachian Region communities in providing health care services to medically underserved areas. The applicable ARC policies and procedures require J-1 physicians to practice 40 hours of primary care per week in a designated Health Profession Shortage Area (HPSA) in the Appalachian Region. The ARC program requires the physician to serve at least 3 years. The State of Mississippi requires four years of service and ARC complies with state requirements. There is no prohibition on J-1 physicians working extra hours or practicing subspecialties after fulfilling primary care requirements.

Although preliminary responsibilities for reviewing J-1 Visa Waiver requests, including supporting documentation, justifications of need, program oversight, and reporting have been delegated to the state health agencies, ARC retains the authority to act on waiver requests and to ensure compliance with program objectives and requirements.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of our review was to determine the compliance with ARC J-1 Visa Waiver program requirements and J-1 physicians perform primary care services in an Appalachian HPSA for 40 hours per week.

SCOPE

During the period March 22 thru April 7, 2005, unannounced visits to four physicians and phone interviews to four additional physicians located in Mississippi were performed. The purpose of the visits and interviews was to verify the practices and locations of the physicians with J-1 Visa Waivers. A ninth physician that was located in Mississippi had moved to Texas without ARC approval and ARC is pursuing his case with INS.

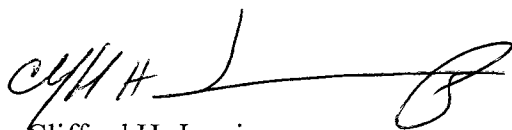
RESULTS

Of the eight J-1 physicians we to contacted, all eight were providing medical care in line with the approved practices. The physicians contacted were satisfied with the program and practices and they generally expressed interest in the possibility of staying in the area upon completion of their waiver periods.

Five of the eight physician's ARC file did not contain the Employment Verification Form, which is to be completed by the physician and their sponsor upon starting work at their assigned location. Forms were faxed to the physician's office with instructions to return to ARC promptly. One physician stated she had just signed the form two weeks ago and ARC should be receiving it soon.

We recommend that ARC follow-up to ensure that Employment Verification forms are timely submitted.

This report will remain open until all Employment Verification forms are received and the issue with the out-of-compliance physician is resolved.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CH Jennings', followed by a long horizontal line and a circular flourish at the end.

Clifford H. Jennings
Inspector General

Attachment

Mississippi
J-1 Doctor visits - April 2005

	<u>Physician</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Specialty</u>	<u>Status</u>
1	Akram, Novera	West Point	Pediatrician	Moved to Texas without ARC approval.
2	Aslam, Naeem	Booneville	Internal Medicine	ARC pursuing with INS site visit #
3	Lee, Ping Nga Allan	Houlka	Internal Medicine	site visit #
4	Villanueva, Mirko	Calhoun City	Internal Medicine	site visit #
5	Castillo, Jaime	Vardaman	Internal Medicine	site visit
6	Hussain, Basharat	Ackerman	Internal Medicine	doctor on vacation till May. 1/
7	Ishikawa, Atsuko	Corinth	Psychiatry	phone interview
8	Milicdvic, Dragica	Water Valley	Family Practice	phone interview #
9	Rasalan, Minerva	West Point	Pediatrics	phone interview # doctor stated she signed form two weeks ago.

= Employment verification form not in file. Faxed form to doctor with instructions to mail to IG office.

1/ - information provided by sponsor.