



SEPTEMBER 30, 1997

OIG REPORT 97-65(H)

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

SUBJECT: Memorandum Survey Report--Review of Selected Health Care Providers in West Virginia

### 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 initially required the physicians to serve at least two years; however, in August 1995 the minimum was changed to three years (unless a state has a longer period.) There is not prohibition on J-1 physicians working extra hours or practicing subspecialties after fulfilling primary care requirements.

Although primary responsibilities for reviewing J-1 visa waiver requests, including supporting documentation, justifications of need, program oversight, and reporting, have been delegated to 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 compliance with ARC J-1 visa waiver program requirements that J-1 physicians perform primary care services in an Appalachian HPSA for 40 hours per week.

### RESULTS

We made unannounced visits to three medical facilities in West Virginia on Tuesday, September 23, 1997 to review the status of three J-1 physicians. We located the physician approved for the E. A. Hawse Health Center in Baker, West Virginia and she indicated she was providing full-time primary

care as required by the ARC agreement. The physician approved for Hampshire Medical Associates in Romney, West Virginia was on leave at the time of our visit, but the receptionist in his office indicated he provides full-time primary care. The physician assigned to City Hospital in Martinsburg, West Virginia under a contract with his employer, the West Virginia University Medical Corporation, was not in his office at the time of our visit. His secretary indicated that he visits nursing home patients on Tuesday afternoons and that he provides full-time inpatient and outpatient psychiatric services. In all three cases, nothing came to our attention to indicate the physicians were not complying with J-1 Visa Waiver program provisions.

  
Hubert N. Sparks  
Inspector General



**APPALACHIAN  
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*Office of the Inspector General*


October 3, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FEDERAL CO-CHAIRMAN

SUBJECT: OIG Reports 97-22(H), 97-28(H), 97-40(H), and 97-65(H)

Enclosed are reports dealing with grants to: 1) Economic Planning and Development Council of Pennsylvania in connection with the statewide manufacturing marketing network program, 2) Maryland Department of Transportation for design work in connection with the C&O Canal Development Project and 3) Pennsylvania Northern Tier Industry and Education Consortium for a work force development project. Also, a summary report of visits to three West Virginia J-1 physician locations is provided.

The conditions noted pertaining to limited record availability, a final report, improved progress reporting, separation of matching funds, and subrecipient monitoring can be resolved between the grantees and ARC program staff.

  
Hubert M. Sparks  
Inspector General

Enclosures

cc: Charles Howard

1666 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, NW WASHINGTON, DC 20235 (202) 884-7675 FAX (202) 884-7691

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