



September 26, 2001

MEMORANDUM FOR The Federal Co-Chairman
ARC General Counsel

SUBJECT: OIG Memorandum Report 01-55(H), J-1 Visa Waiver
Compliance Visits in Macon, 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 requirements 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 healthcare 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 (unless a state has a longer period). There is no 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 the state health agencies, ARC retains the authority to act on waiver requests and to ensure compliance with program objectives requirements.

OBJECTIVE


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

SCOPE AND RESULTS

On August 14, 2001, an unannounced visit was made to the Noxubee General Hospital, Macon, Mississippi, where three J-1 physicians were employed. Two of the J-1 physicians were on-site, and the third J-1 physician was on vacation. Discussion with the J-1 physicians and/or hospital staff confirmed that the J-1 physicians served

full time at the hospital and were providing services in line with program requirements.

Physicians employed by Noxubee General Hospital were A. Osinloye, N. Rahman, and M. Ursachi.


HUBERT N. SPARKS
INSPECTOR GENERAL