


We attempted to locate the J-1 physician approved for the Dawsonville Medical Center, Highway 9 South, Dawsonville, Georgia, however, when we arrived we found that the Dawson Community News currently occupies that space. An employee of the local post office did not have a forwarding address for the physician and indicated that they were forwarding mail for the medical center to an address in Atlanta based on information provided by the building owner. Prior to our visit, we discussed the physician with an ARC official and understood that ARC had been notified by the physician and by state placement personnel that the facility was closing and the physician needed a new placement. Subsequent to our visit, we learned that ARC has been notified that the physician is actively seeking another job in Appalachia. There is a vacancy for which she is qualified at a U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) facility in North Dakota and ARC officials have discussed it with VA officials. ARC officials indicated they would agree to let the physician take the VA job if she is unable to find a job in Appalachia by March 20, 1998. We understand that the term of employment and other requirements contained in the physician's ARC agreement would be enforced by the VA.

We attempted to locate a third physician approved for Dawsonville, Georgia. The employer, Georgia Mountains Primary Care, P.C. initially indicated to ARC that the physician's practice location would be 159 Highway 53 West, Dawsonville, Georgia. We found that space occupied by a chiropractor who had never heard of the J-1 physician. We inquired at the pharmacy next door and were told that the physician had once considered renting the space but had not done so. We noted that the physician's employment contract indicated her practice address would be Hightower Place, Suite 250, 5959 Highway 54 East, Dawsonville. We went to that location and found the space occupied by another medical practice. We also visited the building next door but tenants there did not recognize the J-1 physician's name either. Subsequent to our on-site visit, we contacted the physician's employer and determined that their clinic opened in the second building (5983 Highway 53 East, Suite 200) on February 23, 1998, just after we visited. The physician was not available when we called to talk to her but her employer's administrator told us the office is open every weekday except Tuesdays from 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. He indicated that the patient workload is growing.

We also visited Mountainview Pediatrics in Dahlonega, Georgia but the J-1 physician was at his Gainesville office that day. His office staff indicated he practices in Dahlonega all day on Tuesdays and Thursdays and in Gainesville on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. He also works some Saturday mornings in Dahlonega. Because of time constraints, we did not attempt to locate the physician in Gainesville but we did not note anything that would indicate he was not complying with the J-1 Visa Waiver program provisions.


Hubert N. Sparks
Inspector General