APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION
A Proud Past, A New Vision

Office of the Inspector General

JUNE 17, 1998

OIG REPORT 98-46(H)

MEMORANDUM FOR The Federal Co-Chairman
ARC General Counsel

SUBJECT: Memorandum Report--J-1 Survey Visits in Virginia

On June 9, 1998, unannounced visits were made to three locations in the Grundy, Virginia area for the purpose of verifying the practices and locations of 4 physicians with J-1 Visa waivers. The locations visited were identified in ARC records as the current practice locations of the J-1 physicians, and the survey did not include issues related to disputes between three of the J-1 physicians and a former employer/sponsor.

During our visit, we were able to contact two of the physicians and confirmed that the physicians were practicing at the locations noted on ARC records and providing primary care.

In one case, the physician was unavailable at the time of our visit; but discussion with office staff indicated that the physician practices primary care full time at the rural clinic, with Tuesday morning being the only period he splits with another physician. In a subsequent telephone conversation, the J-1 physician provided information consistent with the office staff's remarks.

The fourth J-1 physician was not contacted, and ARC records and comments of other physicians indicated he had resigned from the sponsoring health care provider approximately June 1, 1998, after about 4 months of practice. In a subsequent telephone conversation with this J-1 physician, he said he had resigned for reasons noted by other physicians that had resigned from the same health care provider and was seeking employment in the Grundy area in order to comply with J-1 Visa Waiver Program requirements. I noted the need for compliance and recommended that he keep state and ARC officials notified of the status of his efforts.

For background information, there is an ongoing major dispute between J-1 and possibly other physicians that centers on charges and countercharges between the physicians and the Director of Arora Clinics (also known as Rural Health Clinics) relative to medical practices. In sum, it appeared about six physicians, including three J-1 physicians and three State 20 approved physicians, had left Arora Clinics after relatively brief periods of employment; and the various charges and countercharges may be under review by other agencies. Also, arbitration provisions in the employment contracts have not yet been implemented; and Arora Clinic officials have petitioned the Department of Justice and ARC requesting, among other things, that J-1 physicians' transfers to work for Buchanan General Hospital not be approved and the physicians be required to honor contracts with Arora Clinics. In the interim, and as confirmed by our visits, two of the J-1 physicians were recently employed by Buchanan General Hospital.

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Inspector General

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