

## **WHAT IS THE J-1 VISA WAIVER PROGRAM?**

An international medical graduate (IMG) who enters the United States to complete graduate medical education does so under a J-1 visa (educational exchange visa). This visa requires the IMG to return to the country of nationality upon completion of that education for a period of not less than two years before re-entering the United States.

Despite extensive recruitment efforts, some rural and urban communities are unable to recruit or retain an adequate number of qualified U.S. primary care physicians. In an effort to improve access to health care for residents of underserved areas, the J-1 Visa Waiver Program permits interested government agencies to request that the United States Department of State recommend that the Immigration and Naturalization Service waive the foreign residency requirement in exchange for an agreement that an IMG who completes medical training in the United States will practice primary care for at least **three years** in a federally designated health professional shortage area.

## **ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS**

Physicians who have completed a residency in one of the following specialties: Family Practice, General Pediatrics, Obstetrics, General Internal Medicine or Psychiatry. **INELIGIBLE:** Physicians with other subspecialties or fellowship experience are not considered to be primary care physicians for the purpose of the ARC J-1 Visa Waiver Program, and therefore are not eligible for participation.

## **PROCEDURES TO BEGIN THE PROCESS**

The organization who has been unsuccessful in recruiting a U.S. doctor should contact our office to discuss the community's need for a physician (**ARC requires proof of at least six months of recruitment efforts prior to your contact with the Dept of Health. Proof must include but is not limited to advertising in newspapers and medical journals of national and statewide circulation and job opportunities placed in all PA medical schools**). Staff will discuss the following in order to determine if our office can be of assistance:

- Practice site address. Staff will determine if the site location would qualify for the waiver program.
- Organization should discuss details of recruitment to date, and furnish information regarding the J-1 physician they may be considering.
- Staff will determine if a site application and J-1 waiver application can be furnished to the organization.

The site application requests detailed information regarding the practice.

**THE POTENTIAL PRACTICE SITE(S) MUST BE APPROVED IN ADVANCE OF  
SUBMITTING A WAIVER APPLICATION.**