

### WHAT IS THE STATE 30 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 reentering the United States.

Despite extensive recruitment efforts, some rural and urban communities are unable to recruit or retain an adequate number of qualified US physicians. In an effort to improve access to health care for residents of underserved areas, the J-1 Visa Waiver Program permits State Departments of Health to request that the United States Department of State recommend that the United States Immigration and Citizenship Services waive the foreign residency requirement for the physician. The waiver request is in exchange for an agreement that an IMG who completes medical training in the United States will practice medicine for at least **three years in a federally designated health professional shortage area or a medically underserved area.** \*States are permitted to request up to thirty such waivers each federal fiscal year. \*Exception - States can request up to five of the thirty waivers for sites not located in federally designated health shortage areas providing that the site serves patients from designated areas.

### ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

Physicians who have completed a residency in one of the following specialties: Family Practice, General Pediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynecology, General Internal Medicine or Psychiatry. **Subspecialties may be considered based on need; however requests for primary care physicians are given priority.** Physicians who are fellowship trained will not be considered for primary care vacancies. **Physicians must have a current Visa status as indicated by their DS-2019 (formerly IAP 66 form).**

### PROCEDURES TO BEGIN THE PROCESS

- The organization that has been unsuccessful in recruiting a US citizen should contact our office to discuss the community's need for a physician. Staff will provide technical assistance regarding the program. Organizations must document that they made a good faith effort to recruit a US citizen. J-1 physicians must be within six months of being able to begin work when the organization submits a waiver application.
- Policies and program forms are available on our website at [www.health.state.pa.us](http://www.health.state.pa.us)- on left side under Professionals & Providers click onto Primary Care Practice Opportunities/J-1 & National Interest Waiver Programs/Policies & Forms. Forms are also available by contacting the program office.

Department of Health, Bureau of Health Planning  
Division of Health Professions Development  
7<sup>th</sup> & Forster Streets, Room 1033  
Health & Welfare Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120  
(717) 772-5298 Fax: (717) 705-6525