Georgia Primary Care Office Conrad 30 J-1 Visa

GPCA Workforce Development Workshop
Beth Walker
Program Operations Specialist, Georgia Primary Care Office
State Office of Rural Health
Georgia Department of Community Health

September 19, 2018
Mission

The mission of the Department of Community Health is to provide access to affordable, quality health care to Georgians through planning, purchasing and oversight.

We are dedicated to A Healthy Georgia.
Introduction:

The Georgia Department of Community Health, State Office of Rural Health is dedicated to providing Georgians with access to affordable, quality health care. As an office within DCH, the State Office of Rural Health works to improve access to health care and reduce health status disparities in the state’s underserved areas.

The Georgia Conrad State 30 J-1 Visa Waiver Program (GA 30) affords international medical graduates (IMGs) on J-1 visas the opportunity to waive their two year home-country physical presence requirement in exchange for three years of medical service to patients in or from medically underserved areas.
Program Overview

The Georgia Conrad State 30 J-1 Visa Waiver Program may recommend up to 30 waivers per federal fiscal year (October 1 – September 30) to address the shortage of qualified physicians in the state’s medically underserved areas.

Waiver support is at the sole discretion of the State Office of Rural Health, as is the number of waiver request supported by the State Office of Rural Health for a particular employer, health care facility, or medical discipline.

The 30 waiver slots are limited annually as follows:

- ≤ 8 slots per medical specialty or position type (e.g., hospitalist)
- ≤ 4 slots per employer/facility (teaching hospitals are exempt from this limit)
**Flex 10:**

The State Office of Rural Health may support up to 10 waivers (of annual 30) for physicians not located in federally-designated shortage areas, but will serve patients who reside in medically underserved shortage areas. Non-designated “flex” waiver requests are considered on a case-by-case basis; however, priority is extended to requests for designated shortage areas (Health Professional Shortage Area HPSAs/ Medically Underserved Area MUAs).

**Note:** J-1 waiver service time in a flex/non-designated area cannot be applied toward the five-year National Interest Waiver (NIW) service requirement.
Conrad 30 J-1 Visa

Application Guidelines

• State Office of Rural Health accepts 30 applications beginning September 1 until all 30 slots are filled or the next program year cycle begins.
• Applications are reviewed on a first come, first served basis.
• Complete applications are reviewed by State Office of Rural Health and, upon favorable review, recommended to Department of State within 30 days.
• Upon favorable review by Department of State, applications are forwarded to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services for final approval or denial.
• Applications received after all slots are filled for a particular year cycle will be returned and the applicant may reapply once the next year cycle begins.

Note: Submission of a waiver application to SORH does not guarantee support by SORH; nor does support by SORH guarantee final waiver approval by DOS/USCIS.
Conrad 30 J-1 Visa

J-1 Physician Waiver Program

Flow Chart

Physician completes training in J-1 status. Waiver required. Consult Physician immigration attorney now.

Submit J-1 waiver application to State Office of Rural Health.

State Office of Rural Health approves waiver and sends recommendation to DOS. Timeline: 30 days.

Obtain DOS Case Number.

State Department processes waiver. Approval time: 4-6 weeks.

Physician wants Conrad State 30 J-1 Physician Waiver.

Physician obtains qualifying waiver job.

Contact attorney to review job offer and waiver eligibility. If all is approved, proceed.

State Department forwards recommendation to USCIS.

USCIS approved J-1 waiver. Time: 4-6 weeks.

H-1B petition request for change of status approved. Time 4 months.
Basic J-1 Waiver Requirements

• Position must be in a HPSA/MUA/MUP except certain State 30 “flex” slots
• Written agreement for three year commitment to work in H-1B status
• Practice medicine at least 40 hours per week in shortage area
• Discipline can be either primary or specialty medicine
• 90 Day Rule-Agree to begin employment within 90 days of USCIS approval of J-1 waiver
• Agree to accept Medicare, Medicaid and indigent patients
Conrad 30 J-1 Visa

Georgia’s Conrad 30 J-1 Visa policy and application:

https://dch.georgia.gov/georgias-j-1-visa-waiver-program
Contact Information

Beth Walker
Program Operations Specialist
State Office of Rural Health
Georgia Primary Care
Phone: 229-276-2750
Email: beth.walker@dch.ga.gov