The Assembly Regulated Professions and Independent Authorities Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2896.

This bill creates a process, through the Advisory Graduate Medical Education Council of New Jersey (AGMEC), for approving clinical clerkship programs for alternatively accredited medical schools located outside the United States that choose to establish their clinical clerkship programs in teaching hospitals in this State. The bill also creates an 11-member "Advisory Committee on Alternatively Accredited Medical School Clinical Clerkships" within the Commission on Higher Education.

Clinical Clerkship Program Approval Process: The bill defines "alternatively accredited medical school" to mean a medical school located outside the United States: (1) in a country that applies accreditation standards that have been determined by the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation within the United States Department of Education to be comparable to the accreditation standards applied to medical schools located within the United States; (2) that continues to meet the accreditation standards of that country; and (3) has medical school students participating in a clinical clerkship program in New Jersey prior to the effective date of this act, or is approved by the Advisory Graduate Medical Education Council of New Jersey (AGMEC) pursuant to this bill to operate a clinical clerkship program in this State.

The bill provides that an alternatively accredited medical school that is operating a clinical clerkship program on the effective date of this bill is authorized to continue its existing clinical clerkship program, provided it maintains its accreditation status as provided in the bill.

A medical school located outside of the United States that does not operate a clinical clerkship program in the State, but otherwise meets the definition of an alternatively accredited medical school, may apply to AGMEC to be approved to operate a clinical clerkship program in this State.

AGMEC is directed to adopt regulations specifying the criteria for approval of a foreign medical school to operate a clinical clerkship program in the State, which criteria shall include, but not be limited to,
satisfactory evaluation, pursuant to a site visit, of the applicant's institution, including both its main campus and any clinical facilities in locations other than the main campus. The bill provides that the applicant shall be responsible for all costs incurred by AGMEC for conducting the site visit, and for reviewing and processing the application.

After a medical school is approved to operate a clinical clerkship program, it may apply to AGMEC for authorization to operate a specific clinical clerkship program in this State, in accordance with standards adopted by AGMEC. A medical school that has been approved to operate a specific clinical clerkship program in this State shall be deemed an alternatively accredited medical school, provided it maintains its accreditation status as provided in the bill.

With respect to increasing the number of students participating in clinical clerkships or the number of programs operated by the school, the bill provides that an alternatively accredited medical school may apply to AGMEC to request the increase. AGMEC is required to notify the applicant, in writing, of the approval or disapproval of an application within 90 days; except that, if AGMEC determines that the application is not complete or additional information is required before it can make a determination, AGMEC shall notify the applicant in writing and have an additional 90 days after receipt of the requested information to approve or disapprove the application. If AGMEC does not affirmatively approve or disapprove the application, or request additional information concerning the application, within 90 days of its submission, the application shall be deemed approved.

The bill provides that AGMEC shall approve an application if the applicant demonstrates that it meets registration standards comparable to those promulgated by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, which include, but are not limited to: (1) a requirement that a medical student who will participate in a clinical clerkship program shall have successfully completed the United States Medical Licensure Examination - Part 1; (2) the hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospital Organizations; (3) the clinical clerkship program shall take place in a hospital with an approved AGMEC or American Osteopathic Association residency training program in the clinical area of instruction for which credit is sought; (4) clinical instruction shall be supervised by a director of medical education; (5) clinical instruction shall be provided pursuant to a written agreement that includes a written curriculum for each individual clinical subject; (6) the hospital shall insure that there is a minimum daily census in each clerkship area that will meet the instructional needs of the clinical subject; (7) the hospital shall have on the premises a library facility that has adequate resources to support clinical clerkships in each core area; (8) each department chair shall be board certified in the specialty area in his department; and (9) the hospital shall ensure a ratio of no less than one medical resident for every two clinical clerkship students.

If AGMEC disapproves the application, the notification of
disapproval shall specify each deficiency, including the reason the applicant failed to meet the registration standards, and shall provide information on remedial steps that applicant must take to meet the standard. An applicant shall be provided the opportunity to submit evidence of remediation, within a time period specified by AGMEC. The bill provides that the applicant shall be responsible for all costs incurred by AGMEC for reviewing and processing the application.

The bill provides that the Commission on Higher Education, in consultation with AGMEC, shall adopt regulations necessary to carry out the purposes of this bill.

Advisory Committee on Alternatively Accredited Medical School Clinical Clerkships: The Advisory Committee is directed to:

C Recommend standards for appropriate facilities to be used in clinical clerkship programs operated by an alternatively accredited medical school;

C Make recommendations as to the number and type of clinical clerkship programs that may be directed by an alternatively accredited medical school at a teaching hospital in this State, based upon the capacity of that hospital and the health care needs of the community in which the hospital is located;

C Review the clinical clerkship programs operated by alternatively accredited medical schools in this State; and

C Make recommendations to AGMEC with respect to the operation of clinical clerkship programs operated by alternatively accredited medical schools at teaching hospitals in this State.

The members of the advisory committee shall include:

-- the Commissioner of Health and Senior Services or his designee, who shall serve ex officio;

-- four members appointed by the Governor who include one representative of the Medical Society of New Jersey, one representative of the New Jersey Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons, one representative of the New Jersey Hospital Association and one representative of an alternatively accredited medical school;

-- two members appointed by the President of the Senate who include one representative of the New Jersey Council of Teaching Hospitals and one representative of a teaching hospital in New Jersey that has students from an alternatively accredited medical school participating in a clinical clerkship program;

-- two members appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly who include one representative of an alternatively accredited medical school and one representative of a teaching hospital in New Jersey that has students from a medical school of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey in a clinical clerkship program;

-- one member appointed by the State Board of Medical Examiners; and

-- one member appointed by the President of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.