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THE NEWSPAPER FOR NEW JERSEY

Health care industry gets behind Obama's plan

Providers offer \$2 trillion in spending cuts to help fund program

BY RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR AND PHILIP ELLIOTT ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President Obama's proposal to provide medical insurance for all Americans took a big step toward becoming reality yesterday after leaders of the health care industry offered \$2 trillion

in spending reductions over 10 years to help pay for the program.

Hospitals, insurance companies, drug-makers and doctors planned to tell Obama today they will voluntarily slow their rate increases in coming years in a move that government economists say would create breathing room to help provide health in-

urance for an estimated 50 million people who go without it.

With this move, Obama picks up key private-sector allies that fought former president Bill Clinton's effort to overhaul health care. Although the offer from the industry groups does not resolve details of a new health care system, it does offer the

prospect of freeing a large chunk of money to help pay for coverage. And it puts the private-sector groups in a good position to influence the bill Congress is writing.

Six major groups plan to deliver a letter to Obama and pledge to cut the growth rate for health care by 1.5 percentage points each year, senior administration officials said yesterday. They spoke on the condition of anonymity in order to sketch

the offer before full details are revealed at a White House event today.

The groups include America's Health Insurance Plans, the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, the American Medical Association, the American Hospital Association and the Service Employees International Union.

Obama has offered an outline for overhauling the health care system, and he [See HEALTH, Page 8]

A NEW WRINKLE IN JOB HUNTING



JERRY MCGREA/THE STAR-LEDGER

Brian Glatt, left, a plastic surgeon in Morristown, consults with Lou Capolino, who decided to spruce up his image after a lack of success in his job search. "I'm a man of about 60. I'm competing against people who are younger," said Capolino.

Older workers find plastic surgery gives them an edge in a tough market

BY SUSAN TODD STAR-LEDGER STAFF

In this dog-eat-dog job market, wrinkles can be costly.

Lou Capolino, an out-of-work sales executive, said he got passed over for several positions before he opted to have a plastic surgeon remove the tell-tale signs of age around his neck and eyes.

For Capolino, the surgery was as much a part of his job-searching strategy as the résumé he had crafted so carefully to boast of his management experience.

"I'm a man of about 60. I'm competing against people who are younger, and I'm being interviewed by people who are younger," Capolino said. "I don't tell my age for fear of turning employers

off." As they compete against candidates who are younger by a decade or more, some seasoned job-seekers like Capolino are resorting to surgery to tighten jowls and erase wrinkles and frown lines wrought by age — and formerly demanding careers.

[See SURGERY, Page 2]

Funds' details appear to be lost in space

N.J. legislator questions aid for interstellar food studies

BY TED SHERMAN AND JOSH MARGOLIN STAR-LEDGER STAFF

For more than five years now, the state has been sending hundreds of thousands of dollars to a small, nonprofit organization with the Star Wars-sounding name, E3CO, whose mission is teaching elementary and high school students about growing food in space.

But if the mission of E3CO seems a bit strange, what happens to its money each year may be even stranger.

Records show that much of the money has gone to pay the salaries of two people — one with political connections and the other a woman who has been dead two years.

The E3CO funding comes in the form of a state appropriation tacked onto the Rutgers budget each year. Tax records show that the nonprofit group has been receiving an annual payment of more than \$100,000 to cover its operating expenses, with \$60,000 going to the salary of executive director Patricia Rowe. Another \$33,388 went to Sara Crane, the ex-wife of Joseph Salema, the one-time chief of staff to former Democratic Gov. Jim Florio.

The university said Rowe died in 2007 and it put a freeze on the money this year because it had no evidence the group has been doing anything since her death. University officials could not say what the organization has done with the money in recent years. E3CO has filed no records or receipts to account for any expenditure.

But despite the freeze by Rutgers, the Legislature again added a \$130,000 special appropriation in the new proposed state budget to [See SPACE, Page 14]

IN OTHER NEWS

Giving a gift to Mother Nature

To offset budget cuts, teams of volunteers worked at High Point State Park in Sussex County over the weekend to keep the area safe and accessible. Page 3

Chief enforcer of election laws leaves legacy as 'dedicated nonpartisan'



BOB BRAUN

Taped to the side of a bookcase behind Frederick Herrmann's desk is a slip of paper bearing a message from a fortune cookie — "Your principles mean more to you than money or success."

That's about as good a sendoff as any for the self-effacing man who retires next month after 25 years as executive director of the state agency that enforces New Jersey's election finance and lobbying laws.

"We have a great reputation throughout the country — even internationally — as one of the most effective ethics commissions anywhere," says Herrmann, the staff chief of the state Election Law Enforcement Commission.

To prove it, he produces a list of statements of praise for the commission he compiled — with one encomium coming from some government agency in Hong Kong.

Some praise comes from the people he regulates — politicians and lobbyists.

Assembly Speaker Joseph Roberts (D-Camden) called Herrmann "a true professional who ensured ELEC fairly and evenly enforced state election laws." Lobbyist James McQueeny, head of Winning Strategies, wrote Herrmann brought New Jersey politics out of a "Dodge City environment."

Herrmann, 61, who aspired to be a history professor but somehow never got there, is about as carefully apolitical as anyone in government could be — and [See BRAUN, Page 7]




Frederick Herrmann is stepping down after 25 years as executive director of the state Election Law Enforcement Commission.

MATT RAINEY/THE STAR-LEDGER

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