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# Who's right on health care?



By Malia Rulon Herman :: @mrulon

WASHINGTON — Samia Bahsoun is counting down the days until New Jersey creates health insurance exchanges under the 2010 Affordable Care Act.

Bahsoun, 51, of Spring Lake, owns a small high-tech communications firm in Holmdel. She pays \$1,200 a month for health insurance for herself and her husband, who is unemployed, but she can't afford health insurance benefits for her employees. That makes it tough for her to compete with large companies for workers.

Under the 2010 health care reform law, which President Barack Obama pushed Congress to pass, states are to create health insurance exchanges by 2014 that will offer affordable insurance coverage to people like Bahsoun. Other people will be eligible for coverage under an expanded Medicaid program.

Bahsoun said she believes the health of her small business — and the health of her employees — depends on the 2010 law.

"Every piece of that reform helps," she said. "People tell me that they don't want anyone to stand between them and their doctor. Well, your insurance company already stands between you and your doctor. And not having access to insurance is a big concern."

GOP presidential challenger Mitt Romney disagrees that the law is a good deal for small businesses or individuals. He has said he would repeal most of its provisions, including

tax credits that would help middle-class families purchase insurance in the new health insurance exchanges.

"Small businesses were asked, what's been the effect of Obamacare on your hiring plans?" Romney said during the first presidential debate on Oct. 3. "And three-quarters of them said it makes us less likely to hire people."

Romney and other Republicans also say the law takes away individual freedoms by mandating that everyone purchase health insurance or pay a penalty.

**COMING THIS WEEK**

**Monday:** Women's issues

**Tuesday:** Job creation

**Wednesday:** Medicare/Social Security

**Thursday:** Budget deficit

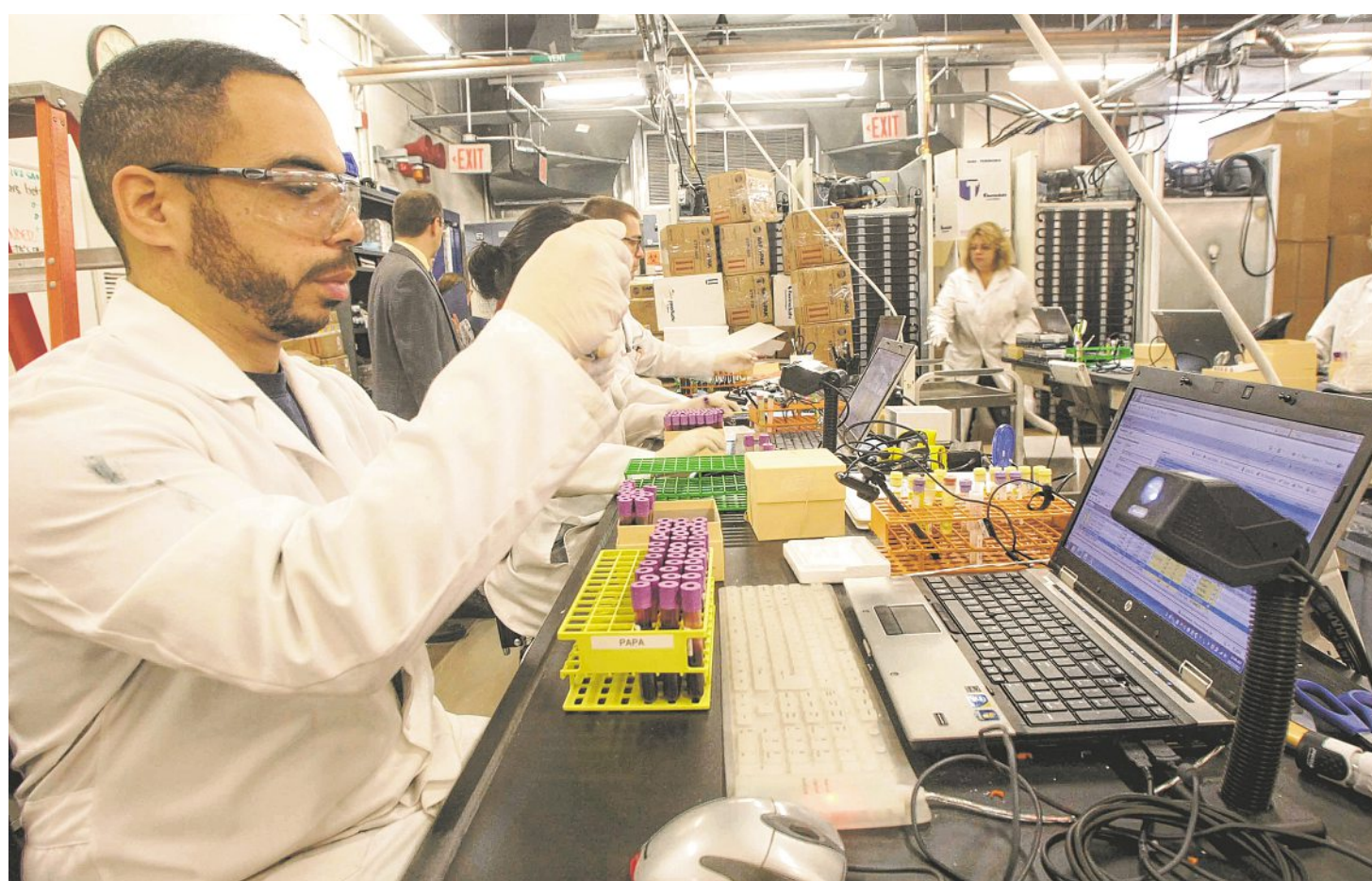
**INSIDE**

More coverage, including a look at Obama and Romney's views and incorrect statements on health care.

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## Unlocking Tourette syndrome mysteries



Dale Heyward, a communications coordinator, works with DNA samples at the Human Genetics Institute of New Jersey in the Life Sciences building at Rutgers University's Busch Campus in Piscataway. PHOTOS BY AUGUSTO F. MENEZES/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

# RU researchers share DNA in hunt for clues

By Cheryl Makin  
@CherylMakin

PISCATAWAY — In the midst of the hustle and bustle of Rutgers University's Busch Campus, a laboratory's study may hold secrets that someday could help thousands.

Within the Rutgers University Cell and DNA Repository in the Life Sciences Institute lies the New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome Sharing Repository. A unique collaboration, the repository collects DNA in the form of blood or saliva from Tourette syndrome patients and

family members for research studies.

A sharing resource of clinical and genetic data, the repository can be accessed by researchers around the world and is the only one that houses data from Tourette syndrome patients, said Gary A. Heiman, who runs the daily operations of the collaboration with the New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome and is a Rutgers assistant professor in the Department of Genetics.

Tourette is an inherited neurological disorder characterized by tics,



Jay A. Tischfield, director of the Human Genetics Institute, holds a microplate used to perform tests.

See TOURETTE, Page A2

A CARING COMMUNITY

## Sharing the joy with 'sisters'

Cancer survivor offers makeovers

By Virginia Hawkins

Special to the Home News Tribune

I am a person who has from a little girl been intrigued with skin, hair and personal care.

Growing up with 14 siblings, my mom and dad — both of whom have passed — would often refer to me as "my rich, poor daughter." I'd smile, and on occasion, when I think about it, it still puts a smile on my face, accompanied with a fine line or two on each side. Even though I did not pursue my childhood/adult passion, today I am just as passionate, if not more so, about how I represent myself before my family, friends, co-workers and the world.

Another passion of mine is helping women feel better about themselves, particularly when they feel unattractive or less than their best. And I may have become more knowledgeable in that area than I ever thought I would be after being diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer in June 2010.

Prior to my diagnosis, I had been an avid supporter of the Sisters Network of Central New Jersey, an affiliate of a national African-American support group. I've met many women from all walks of life who have been touched by breast cancer in some way, predominantly survivors.

My desire to help women with appreciating their image was sparked at the young age of 22. Though I have always been a beauty buff, my skin did not always re-

See 'SISTERS', Page A17



PERTH AMBOY MAYORAL ELECTION

## Call for partisan Bay City races debated

By Suzanne Russell  
@SRussellMyCJ

PERTH AMBOY — The idea was floated by the Rev. Milton Lester before the first candidate offered an opening statement: Perth Amboy might want to consider changing its form of government to avoid the confusion of having six mayoral candidates on the fall ballot.

"It's ludicrous to have six candidates running," Lester, president of the Perth Amboy NAACP chapter, said at the start of Thursday's mayoral debate hosted by the organization. "Six candidates are splitting us up. Like we don't have enough problems."

Lester suggested that some candidates consider dropping out and

teaming with others. He has expressed concern that Perth Amboy's next mayor might be elected by a small margin by the city's more than 21,500 registered voters.

"We don't need the fighting. We need unity," said Lester, who wants to encourage whoever wins to reach out to the other candidates because they all have a skill set to offer.

A near-capacity crowd filled the auditorium at Perth Amboy High School for the debate between Mayor Wilda Diaz, who is completing her first four-year term, and five challengers: Billy Delgado, Sharon Huberman, Robert McCoy, Miguel Morales and Frank Salado.

Lester said the large turnout shows voters are concerned.

"Or maybe, like me, you are really

confused," he said.

During the debate, candidates were asked if they would support Perth Amboy changing its form of government to partisan with primary elections.

Perth Amboy has had nonpartisan elections — in which candidates run on slates rather than along party lines — for many years. There is no primary election, and until this year the elections were conducted in May. This year, the balloting was moved to November to save money. Perth Amboy had been one of only two municipalities in Middlesex County to hold elections in May.

"Perth Amboy is a nonpartisan town, and I would support Perth Am-

See PARTISAN, Page A17

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WEATHER

AREA FIVE-DAY FORECAST

Table with 5 columns: Today, Tomorrow, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Each column includes weather icons, descriptions (e.g., 'Mostly sunny and mild'), and temperature ranges (e.g., '67/45').

MARINE FORECAST Mostly sunny today. Winds west at 15 to 20 knots. Waves 1 to 2 feet in bays, 3 to 4 feet in seas.

COMFORT INDICATORS

Sunburn Index: 3
Air Quality: Good
Wind Chill: 42° at 8 a.m., 58° at noon, 63° at 4 p.m.
Garden Forecast: High pressure will promote dry and pleasant conditions today and tomorrow.

TIDES

Table showing tide times for Sandy Hook and Keyport at Raritan Bay. Columns include location, time, and tide type (High/Low).

SUN AND MOON

Table showing moon phases: First (Oct. 21), Full (Oct. 29), Last (Nov. 6), New (Nov. 13). Includes sunset, sunrise, and moonrise/moonset times.

ALMANAC

New Brunswick Readings Values are for 24 hours ending 7 a.m. yesterday. Information provided by Rutgers Meteorology Department, Cook College. Temperatures: High, Low, Average, Normal High, Normal Low, Normal Average, High this month, Low this month. Precipitation: Yesterday, Month-to-date, Year-to-date, Normal year-to-date. Records: High temp., Low temp., Precipitation, High temp. today, Low temp. today, Precip today. Degree Days: Heating degree days, Month-to-date, Season-to-date, This date last year, Normal season-to-date.

LOTTERIES

SATURDAY, OCT. 20
NEW JERSEY Midday Pick-3: 001, Evening Pick-3: 465, Jersey Cash 5: 1, 3, 9, 16, 26
NEW YORK Midday Daily: 237, Evening Daily: 602
MULTISTATE Powerball: Too late for deadline

TOURETTE

Continued from Page A1

which are repeated involuntary movements and uncontrollable vocal phonic sounds. The disorder has been found to have a genetic connection, and the research examines whether specific segments of DNA or genes are associated with Tourette and related behaviors, such as chronic tics, obsessive compulsive disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

"A large percentage of TS patients, about 60 percent, have other disorders, such as OCD (obsessive-compulsive disorder) and ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), as well," said Jay A. Tischfield, director of the Human Genetics Institute and a professor in the Department of Genetics.

"These other disorders can be even more debilitating than the tics," Heiman added. Tourette symptoms, which typically reveal themselves in childhood, often are exacerbated in the teen years. Often, this can lead to ridicule and bullying in school.

"We want to find ways to help make them feel less alienated and alone," Tischfield said. "Children can be chastised or teased for things they can't help. In learning, their skills diminish. They can be regarded as a nuisance in class. These are extremely talented kids that can end up literally on the trash pile. It is a consistent problem, and it is something that can be avoided."

Children with Tourette grow into adults with Tourette, though, for some, symptoms can lessen with age, he said.

"They still suffer and have to work through challenges," Heiman said. "It does not disappear. It is not just a problem for particular individuals. It is a community problem."



Jay A. Tischfield describes one of the laboratory robots that do a considerable amount of work at the Human Genetics Institute of New Jersey in the Life Sciences building at Rutgers University's Busch Campus in Piscataway.

ONLINE

For a video related to this story, visit MyCentralJersey.com.

sey, NJCTS was formed in 2004 as a center of excellence, with support from the state Department of Health and Human Services. Its purpose was to offer a wide variety of coordinated services, such as effective treatment options, support and professional assistance.

"We had a helpline," Tischfield said. "We expanded into providing services such as legal advocacy at the school level. We educate teachers, administrators and the medical community. We offer advocacy throughout the state. We have expanded to have an even broader impact with the affiliation with Rutgers and the sharing repository."

Celebrating its fifth year, the sharing repository was established in 2007 and is the world's first for Tourette. It recently was designated as the nation's Tourette cell repository by the National Institute of Mental Health and received a grant of \$1.5 million to collect the DNA samples at about 20 sites in the U.S., Europe and Asia.

The NJCTS sharing repository can be accessed by qualified researchers worldwide, Tischfield said. When requested, DNA and cell-line samples are provided for research. Maps dotted with pins showing the various sites around the nation and the world that have received samples are hung one of the hallways of the repository.

can't be classified as one disorder."

Tischfield and Omaggio are fathers of grown sons with Tourette, so this study hits close to home.

"Life turns on a dime," Tischfield said. "We had been researching a number of diseases, and Faith Rice, the executive director of NJCTS, called and asked how come Tourette syndrome was not listed. I did not have a good answer for that. I have a son with TS. I should have had a better answer. As a result, I become more active. The field needed a push scientifically."

Tischfield said many agencies offer advocacy, training and education, but not many offer research.

"I thought, 'Why not New Jersey as a nucleus?'" he said. "We are studying how genes can cause Tourette syndrome. Getting the cell samples is critical to moving the research forward."

According to Tischfield, Heiman and Omaggio, the research that stems from the repository hopefully will lead to identifying genetic factors that might be a cause of Tourette and related disorders. In turn, more appropriate treatments, unhindered by serious side effects, and perhaps, even a cure, could be forthcoming.

Tischfield hopes research from the study will lead to new pharmaceuticals and treatments, and he said six clinical trials are under way.

"I would like to see them able to design specific treatments that are tailored before the next generation," he said. "There is nothing specific for disorders like this. There won't be until we know what causes it."

"We need to better understand the mysterious disorder. This leads to the whole concept of personalized medicine. We are moving into that area for TS specifically. It will be exciting not to have to practice 19th-century medicine."

Importance of data

Not so rare

Previously, Tourette was thought to be much more rare than it is, NJCTS board President Tim Omaggio said. Therefore, attention to it in terms of research funding and medical knowledge was equally rare.

"There is not much research on TS," Tischfield said. "And in science, in medicine, it is often the squeaky wheel that gets the grease. In the past, the TS community was not well organized. There were no advocacy groups that pushed for research and federal dollars. We needed to increase the recognition."

"We were dealing with a lot more ignorance," Omaggio added.

Action occurs when enough people get together and move in unison to a common goal, Tischfield said.

The Somerville-based not-for-profit NJCTS was created in response to this need. An offshoot of the Tourette Syndrome Association of New Jersey...

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Oct. 21, the 295th day of 2012. There are 71 days left in the year.

On this date: 1797: The U.S. Navy frigate Constitution, also known as "Old Ironsides," is christened in Boston's harbor. 1879: Thomas Edison perfects a workable electric light at his laboratory in Menlo Park, N.J. 1917: Members of the

1st Division of the U.S. Army training in Lunenburg, France, become the first Americans to see action on the front lines of World War I.

1959: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, opens to the public in New York.

1960: Democrat John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon clash in their fourth debate.

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Advertisement for 'Cocktails for a Cause' on Thursday, October 25th. Features logos for Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, The Old Bank, and Harvest Moon Brewery & Cafe. Includes details about 9pm-10pm and 7pm-8pm events, donation amounts, and locations in New Brunswick.