

Obama urges young adults at Miami Dade College to sign up for health care

Enrollment window opens Nov. 1

By Associated Press , Peter Burke - Local10.com Managing Editor

Posted: 12:23 PM, October 20, 2016

Updated: 3:47 PM, October 20, 2016

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President Barack Obama and U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Fla., arrive at Miami International Airport, Oct. 20, 2016.

MIAMI - President Barack Obama on Thursday defended his namesake health care program, long a target of Republicans and recently criticized by some Democrats, saying millions of Americans "now know the financial security of health insurance" because of the Affordable Care Act.

"It's worked," he said, even while allowing that the program isn't perfect. "No law is."

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Obama chalked up the Republican criticism to "nothing more than politics" and GOP envy that "a Democratic president named Barack Obama passed the law. That's just the truth."

He called on both parties to set aside the "political rhetoric" and "be honest about what's working, what needs fixing and how we fix it."

Obama said repealing the law, as congressional Republicans repeatedly have failed to do, won't solve the problem "because right off the bat repeal would take away health care from 20 million people" and affect millions of other health care consumers.

Less than two weeks before people can start to enroll in the overhaul's health plans on Nov. 1, Obama used a speech at Miami Dade College to kick off a push by the administration to encourage more people to sign up, with a particular emphasis on young adults.

Obama arrived at Miami International Airport shortly after 1 p.m. He was joined by U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Fla. They were greeted on the tarmac by Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez and Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine.

Afterward, Obama plans to speak at a campaign rally in Miami Gardens for Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and at a fundraising dinner for Democratic governors.

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