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# 'Repealing Obamacare Is Not The Answer,' says Obama At Miami Dade College

By [WILSON SAYRE \(/PEOPLE/WILSON-SAYRE\)](#) • 1 HOUR AGO

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*President Barack Obama talks about the Affordable Care Act in front of hundreds of students and special guests at Miami-Dade College on October 20, 2016.*

KATIE LEPRI / WLRN



Obamacare's namesake came to Miami-Dade County Thursday afternoon to talk about the Affordable Care Act, just a few weeks before the program's fourth open enrollment period starts.

President Barack Obama, before heading to a Hillary Clinton campaign rally in Miami Gardens, spoke to a large crowd of mostly students at Miami Dade College Wolfson Campus.

He once again--and perhaps for the last time as president in South Florida--tried to make the case for the ACA. "Never in American history has the uninsured rate been lower than it is today," said Obama to the enthusiastic crowd.

The President outlined in his speech some of the basics of the Affordable Care Act, why he wanted to pass it and tried to address some of the concerns that have been swirling around the legislation.

"Part of the problem is that a Democratic president named Barack Obama wrote the law," Obama quipped as students chuckled.

"Repeal is not the answer," said Obama. "When one of these companies comes out with a new smartphone and it has a few bug, what do they do? They fix it, they upgrade. Unless it catches fire... But you don't go back to using a rotary phone. You don't say, well we're repealing smartphones."

Students wore blue tee-shirts with Miami-Dade College emblazoned on them in white. Most are part of the college's honors college and were informed of their invitation to the speech via email.

Several students said their family got health insurance through the health care exchanges, many more have benefited from being allowed to stay on their parents health care plans until they turn 25. Though most of those in the room hadn't hit that limit, they said the ability to afford health insurance is still a concern.

"I feel a lot of Cubans don't want to associate themselves with the Democratic party because they see candidates like Bernie Sanders as Socialist and there's obvious reasons why a Cuban family would be against socialism," said 19 year old Beatrice Perez.

Miami-Dade County has some of the highest rates of enrollment (<https://aspe.hhs.gov/basic-report/plan-selections-zip-code-and-county-health-insurance-marketplace-march-2016>) in the health care program in the country. Still, Florida is home to the third largest number of uninsured individuals, 19 percent of whom are in the so-called Medicaid coverage gap. These individuals make too much money to qualify for Medicaid, but too little to qualify for subsidies through the affordable care act. [See a full explanation here. (<http://wlrn.org/post/what-its-be-health-coverage-gap-florida>)]

Florida is one of a shrinking number of states that has consistently chosen not to expand Medicaid, which would cover these individuals, which could be as many as 712,000, according to the white house. However, now three years into the program, not all the problems have been worked out.

On Thursday, Obama outlines a few changes he'd like to see to the ACA. Among them, states like Florida expanding Medicaid.

"If your governor could put politics aside..." said Obama as the crowd booed, to which he replied "don't boo, vote."

"If your governor would just put politics aside and do what's right, then more than 700,000 Floridians would suddenly have access to coverage," he said.

He also suggested money saved through the ACA be put towards providing more tax credits for more middle income families and young adults. He also wants to add a public fall back plan. But concern about the future of the ACA as a whole was on everyone's mind.

"I want to see how it transitions from his presidency to the new presidency since, you know, he's going to be leaving office pretty soon. That's my biggest concern," said MDC student Anthony Ordonez, who identified as a republican but is leaning towards voting for Clinton.

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has been clear in his rejection of ACA. "We have to repeal and replace Obamacare," he said at the third presidential debate.

"You take a look at the kind of numbers that that will cost us in the year [2017], it is a disaster, if we don't repeal and replace now, it's probably going to die of its own weight. But, Obamacare has to go," said Trump.

Florida's Obamacare premiums are set to rise an average of 19 percent (<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/health-care/article99562272.html>) in 2017 and more insurance companies have decided not to participate (<http://www.sun-sentinel.com/business/consumer/fl-aca-enroll-by-zip-20150123-story.html>) in the exchanges as enrollment has simultaneously slowed nationwide.

Clinton has said while there is room for improvement, the country shouldn't throw out the benefits of the program, including prevent insurance companies from denying coverage for pre-existing conditions, lifting lifetime limits, and the ability for young adults up to stay on their parents health plans until through 25

years of age.

“The Affordable Care Act extended the solvency of the Medicare trust fund. So if he repeals it, our Medicare problem gets worse. What we need to do is go after the long-term health care drivers. We've got to get cost down, increase value, emphasize wellness,” Clinton said at the final presidential debate.

But, Barack Obama is hopeful the ACA will remain, if not helped by his departure from the presidency.

“I have always said that for all the good that the Affordable Care Act is doing right now, for as big a step forward as it was, it's still just a first step, it's like... buying a starter home. It's a lot better than not having a home but you hope that over time, you make some improvements,” said Obama.

But like in even the best of classes, some students started to check out towards the end of his 50-minute speech, some noodling around on their phones, happy to catch a glimpse of the president on what is likely his last tour in South Florida as President.

“You know healthcare is complicated, think about this speech, it's been pretty long, and you're just thinking wow, I just want to take a picture with the president or something.”

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