



## Obama to Hispanics: We won't deport relatives because you enroll in ObamaCare

By Jonathan Easley - 03/18/14 01:49 PM EDT

President Obama on Tuesday sought to assure legal immigrants that they can sign up for ObamaCare without worrying that “the immigration people” will come for family members who are in the country illegally.

In an interview with Univision Deportes, a Spanish-language sports radio show, Obama said immigration officials won't have access to the personal information that consumers provide when signing up for healthcare on the new exchanges.

“Well, the main thing for people to know is that any information you get, you know, asked with respect to buying insurance, does not have anything to do with ... the rules governing immigration,” Obama said. “And you know, you can qualify if you're a legal resident, if you are ... legally present in the United States.

“You know, if you have a family where some people are citizens or legally here, and others are not documented, the immigration people will never get that information.”

Adolf Falcon, the senior vice president of the National Alliance for Hispanic Health, told The Hill that Hispanic families are wary of Obama's assurances because of his record on deportations.

“It is a big concern of mixed status families — they hear [the president's] assurance, but because of the level of deportations that have happened, there's a lot of families that don't know whether they can trust that assurance,” he said. “It creates an atmosphere of concern.”

In Obama's first four years in office, his administration deported people at a faster rate than any of the four previous administrations.

Falcon said his group fields about 4,000 calls a week from potential Hispanic consumers seeking information about the exchanges. He said that a good deal of the callers are asking about mixed-status families, seeking to make sure their applications can't be used against family members.

For example, a family with a parent who is in the country illegally, and thus not eligible for ObamaCare, will still have to enroll his or her child who is eligible. This provokes fears in the parent that they are leaving themselves exposed.

Obama on Tuesday sought to allay those fears.

“You know, you will qualify, you know, regardless of what your family’s status is,” Obama said. “So, you know, people should not hold back just because they’re in a mixed-family status.”

The White House has said there are 10.2 million uninsured Hispanics eligible for ObamaCare in the country, and about 8.1 million are likely eligible for tax credits. Hispanics have the highest rate of uninsured of any ethnic group in the country.

The federal government doesn’t require consumers to identify their ethnicity when applying for healthcare coverage, but data from some state health exchanges suggest Hispanics are lagging.

The administration has focused intensely on Hispanics in its final enrollment push through initiatives like the Latino Enrollment Week of Action, and in partnership with a broad array of Spanish-language media outlets.

There are a host of other reasons that Hispanics have been slow to enroll — many are gaining coverage for the first time and worry the costs are prohibitive.

<http://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/201076-obama-makes-o-care-pitch-to-hispanics-the#ixzz2wLPmvkwl>