

## Will 'Obamacare' reap better health, cost savings?

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During a forum about the Affordable Care Act, James Carville and Mollye Demosthenidy said healthcare reform is a work in progress. (Photos by Cheryl Gerber)

More than 200 people filled the Lavin-Bernick Center's Qatar Ballroom on Tuesday (April 9) to hear Tulane University faculty members James Carville and Mollye Demosthenidy discuss the passage, implementation and future of the [Affordable Care Act \(ACA\)](#).

[Carville](#), a professor of practice in political science, and [Demosthenidy](#), a clinical assistant professor of global health systems and development, opened with a discussion of the healthcare and insurance landscape, and how it has changed under the ACA.

Demosthenidy framed the goals of any healthcare reform as making improvements in the cost, access and quality of health care. The ACA, Demosthenidy said, has had the most success in increasing access, but achieving cost reductions will be a challenge.

Carville, a former strategist for President Bill Clinton, described the challenges that the Clinton administration encountered in its attempts to enact healthcare reform, and highlighted the different substantive and political approaches that the Obama

administration and Congress took in 2009.



The discussion of healthcare reform draws an overflow crowd to the Qatar Ballroom in the Lavin-Bernick Center.

Carville noted that the ACA will provide more benefits to older or sicker Americans than to the young and healthy, but argued that good public policy is that which is better for most, not that which is better for everyone. He thinks President Barack Obama should do more to sell the Affordable Care Act, saying that Obama should be “salesman in chief.”

Demosthenidy discussed the legal and legislative challenges to the ACA, such as the Supreme Court ruling on the ACA's individual mandate and states' efforts to limit their participation in the ACA.

Responding to questions about the law's effect on public health education and research, Demosthenidy said the ACA raises important questions about how schools and hospitals can increase the availability of preventive care options and lower costs for patients.

She concluded the discussion by noting that educators must be innovative and prepare students for what healthcare practice will look like in 20 years, not today.

The event was part of the celebration of [National Public Health Week](#) at Tulane University.

*Alex Chasick, a freelance writer living in New Orleans, is a 2005 graduate of Tulane University.*