SALT LAKE CITY -- A new survey finds that health insurance is one of the biggest problems facing Utah small-business owners.

They gathered at Caputo's Market and Deli at 300 West and 300 South in Salt Lake City to talk about the survey results. Only 40 percent of the 300 small businesses surveyed offer health insurance.

Tony Caputo has 30 employees but cannot afford coverage. "I wish I could, but I can't," he said.

Caputo thinks the government should be in charge. "If you want things, you have to pay for them," he said.

The survey didn't go so far. Sixty-seven percent support a shared responsibility among government, businesses, individuals and the healthcare industry.

Most say healthcare reform will get the economy back on track.

Key findings of the Utah study include:

- The number one concern for Utah small businesses in healthcare reform is controlling costs, followed by having coverage that is guaranteed and covers everybody.
- 88% of Utah small businesses not offering health insurance say they can't afford to, while 79% of those who do offer it say they are really struggling to do so.
- 80% of small businesses support establishing a health insurance pool to create a marketplace where small businesses and individuals choose their coverage. Only 12% oppose this proposal.
- 79% of small businesses want to eliminate preexisting condition rules, and 74% see these rules as a barrier to starting a business.
- 77% support a proposal to establish a minimum standard of coverage for health insurance benefit packages in order to facilitate comparison shopping in the marketplace, ensure access to medical care, and protect people from financial risk.
- 69% prefer having the choice of a private or public health insurance plan, with 20% preferring private only and 7% preferring only a public health insurance plan.
- 67% say it is important for individuals, employers, insurers, the government and healthcare providers to share the responsibility for making healthcare more affordable.
- 64% say healthcare reform is important to getting the economy back on track.
- 57% say their company has a responsibility to provide health coverage for its employees.
- 46% believe that businesses that don't offer health insurance should be required to pay something to cover their employees, although 40% say no contribution should be required. Of those who agree a contribution should be required, more than half believe it should be less than 5% of payroll.

The research was conducted by Lake Research Partners in early June through a random telephone survey of 300 small businesses in Utah. To read the report click here.
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