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Likely GOP voters oppose health care reform

82 percent of likely GOP Idaho voters oppose the legislation passed by Congress.

In the past five years, John Green and his wife, Dorothy, have spent about \$160,000 of their own money on heart surgery, gall bladder surgery, kidney stones, diabetes treatment and more.

Theirs is one example of how spiraling costs are hitting Idaho families. But that doesn't mean the Greens like the new health care law enacted by Congress at President Obama's urging.

"I don't disagree with the idea health care needs to be reformed," said Green, 62, of Eagle, who racked up those bills even though he has health coverage. "We ought to be bright enough to fix the system, if we get greed and political power out of the way."

Green is among likely voters in Tuesday's Republican primary who responded last week to an Idaho Statesman/KBOI-TV Channel 2 poll on health care. Likely voters in the Democratic primary were not polled, because other questions in the poll focused on high-profile statewide and congressional primary contests in the GOP, Idaho's majority party.

Fewer than one in five respondents favored the legislation, which eventually will require nearly all Americans to have health insurance. Nearly 75 percent support Idaho leaders' decision to join a lawsuit to stop it.

"I think most of the reason people are against health care reform is they don't understand it," said Nancy Snodgrass, state coordinator for Idaho Main Street Alliance, a coalition of mainly small businesses that backs the law. "They just think it is big government taking over," but it's not, she said. States will have some control as the plans are put into place, Snodgrass said.

It doesn't look that way to Green. In an interview, he worried the reforms will give the U.S. the same headaches as in Canada and other countries where the government controls health care.

Blaine Grow, 57, of Nampa, is self-employed selling long-term care insurance. Grow, who also was among those polled, said in an interview that he pays about \$1,000 a month for coverage with a \$6,000 deductible.

That's high, but insurance is best used for big expenses such as surgery, he said. Grow said one benefit of his coverage is that it encourages him to take good care of himself - exercising, taking vitamins, eating right - to reduce medical bills. "If people are paying for their own insurance, like I do, they are careful about just running to the doctor," Grow said.