Why Social Security and Medicare Are Vital to Older Americans in Delaware

Social Security and Medicare provide income and health security to older Americans aged 65 and older. Growing debt burdens, dwindling pensions, and increasing health care costs make these programs more important than ever. Here’s what they do for Delaware.

Social Security in Delaware

Older Delawareans count on Social Security benefits earned through a lifetime of work
- A total of 92 percent, or 129,769, of older Delaware residents received Social Security in 2012. The average annual benefit was $16,000.
- Social Security accounted for 47 percent of the typical older Delawarean’s family income.
- Low- and middle-income older adults in Delaware are even more reliant on Social Security’s earned benefit, typically receiving 69 percent of their family income from Social Security.

Social Security keeps middle-income older Delawareans from falling into poverty
- Census data show about 8 percent, or 9,959, of older Delawareans living in poverty.
- Without Social Security income, an additional 31 percent of older Delawareans, or 40,526 people, would fall into poverty.

Social Security plays an important role in Delaware’s economy
- Social Security provided $2.7 billion in benefits to all Delawareans and $2 billion in benefits to Delawareans aged 65 and older in 2012.

Medicare in Delaware

Medicare provides guaranteed health coverage, but out-of-pocket costs are high
- On average, Delaware’s Medicare beneficiaries spent an estimated $4,610 on out-of-pocket health care costs in 2012.
- In 2012, older Delaware adults enrolled in Medicare spent, on average, an estimated 13 percent of their income on out-of-pocket health care costs.

Medicare provides peace of mind for older Delawareans
- Nearly 97 percent of older Delawareans were enrolled in Medicare in 2011.

Medicare plays an important role in Delaware’s economy
- The Medicare program spent an estimated $1.3 billion on health care services for 134,925 older Delawareans in 2012.