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

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 Hawaii.

Social Security in Hawaii

Older Hawaii residents count on Social Security benefits earned through a lifetime of work

- A total of 87 percent, or 184,086, of older Hawaii residents received Social Security in 2012. The average annual benefit was $14,800.
- Social Security accounted for 32 percent of the typical older Hawaii resident’s family income.
- Low- and middle-income older adults in Hawaii are even more reliant on Social Security’s earned benefit, typically receiving 58 percent of their family income from Social Security.

Social Security keeps middle-income older Hawaii residents from falling into poverty

- Census data show about 8 percent, or 15,943, of older Hawaii residents living in poverty.
- Without Social Security income, an additional 25 percent of older Hawaii residents, or 49,197 people, would fall into poverty.

Social Security plays an important role in Hawaii’s economy

- Social Security provided $3.3 billion in benefits to all Hawaii residents and $2.7 billion in benefits to Hawaii residents aged 65 and older in 2012.

Medicare in Hawaii

Medicare provides guaranteed health coverage, but out-of-pocket costs are high

- On average, Hawaii’s Medicare beneficiaries spent an estimated $3,236 on out-of-pocket health care costs in 2012.
- In 2012, older Hawaii adults enrolled in Medicare spent, on average, an estimated 10 percent of their income on out-of-pocket health care costs.

Medicare provides peace of mind for older Hawaii residents

- Nearly 95 percent of older Hawaii residents were enrolled in Medicare in 2011.

Medicare plays an important role in Hawaii’s economy

- The Medicare program spent an estimated $1.3 billion on health care services for 197,456 older Hawaii residents in 2012.