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

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 Idaho.

Social Security in Idaho

Older Idahoans count on Social Security benefits earned through a lifetime of work
- A total of 95 percent, or 201,302, of older Idaho residents received Social Security in 2012. The average annual benefit was $14,600.
- Social Security accounted for 58 percent of the typical older Idahoan’s family income.
- Low- and middle-income older adults in Idaho are even more reliant on Social Security’s earned benefit, typically receiving 81 percent of their family income from Social Security.

Social Security keeps middle-income older Idahoans from falling into poverty
- Census data show about 8 percent, or 16,650, of older Idahoans living in poverty.
- Without Social Security income, an additional 38 percent of older Idahoans, or 74,417 people, would fall into poverty.

Social Security plays an important role in Idaho’s economy
- Social Security provided $3.8 billion in benefits to all Idahoans and $2.9 billion in benefits to Idahoans aged 65 and older in 2012.

Medicare in Idaho

Medicare provides guaranteed health coverage, but out-of-pocket costs are high
- On average, Idaho’s Medicare beneficiaries spent an estimated $3,837 on out-of-pocket health care costs in 2012.
- In 2012, older Idaho adults enrolled in Medicare spent, on average, an estimated 14 percent of their income on out-of-pocket health care costs.

Medicare provides peace of mind for older Idahoans
- Nearly 98 percent of older Idahoans were enrolled in Medicare in 2011.

Medicare plays an important role in Idaho’s economy
- The Medicare program spent an estimated $1.7 billion on health care services for 209,053 older Idahoans in 2012.