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

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 Maine.

Social Security in Maine

Older Mainers count on Social Security benefits earned through a lifetime of work
- A total of 94 percent, or 211,908, of older Maine residents received Social Security in 2012. The average annual benefit was $13,900.
- Social Security accounted for 53 percent of the typical older Mainer’s family income.
- Low- and middle-income older adults in Maine are even more reliant on Social Security’s earned benefit, typically receiving 79 percent of their family income from Social Security.

Social Security keeps middle-income older Mainers from falling into poverty
- Census data show about 8 percent, or 16,466, of older Mainers living in poverty.
- Without Social Security income, an additional 39 percent of older Mainers, or 81,493 people, would fall into poverty.

Social Security plays an important role in Maine’s economy
- Social Security provided $4 billion in benefits to all Mainers and $2.9 billion in benefits to Mainers aged 65 and older in 2012.

Medicare in Maine

Medicare provides guaranteed health coverage, but out-of-pocket costs are high
- On average, Maine’s Medicare beneficiaries spent an estimated $3,758 on out-of-pocket health care costs in 2012.
- In 2012, older Maine adults enrolled in Medicare spent, on average, an estimated 12 percent of their income on out-of-pocket health care costs.

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

Medicare plays an important role in Maine’s economy
- The Medicare program spent an estimated $1.7 billion on health care services for 223,130 older Mainers in 2012.