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

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 Mississippi.

Social Security in Mississippi

Older Mississippians count on Social Security benefits earned through a lifetime of work
- A total of 93 percent, or 375,448, of older Mississippi residents received Social Security in 2012. The average annual benefit was $14,000.
- Social Security accounted for 61 percent of the typical older Mississippian’s family income.
- Low- and middle-income older adults in Mississippi are even more reliant on Social Security’s earned benefit, typically receiving 94 percent of their family income from Social Security.

Social Security keeps middle-income older Mississippians from falling into poverty
- Census data show about 13 percent, or 48,114, of older Mississippians living in poverty.
- Without Social Security income, an additional 42 percent of older Mississippians, or 162,616 people, would fall into poverty.

Social Security plays an important role in Mississippi’s economy
- Social Security provided $7.7 billion in benefits to all Mississippians and $5.2 billion in benefits to Mississippians aged 65 and older in 2012.

Medicare in Mississippi

Medicare provides guaranteed health coverage, but out-of-pocket costs are high
- On average, Mississippi’s Medicare beneficiaries spent an estimated $4,851 on out-of-pocket health care costs in 2012.
- In 2012, older Mississippi adults enrolled in Medicare spent, on average, an estimated 19 percent of their income on out-of-pocket health care costs.

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

Medicare plays an important role in Mississippi’s economy
- The Medicare program spent an estimated $3.9 billion on health care services for 392,675 older Mississippians in 2012.