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

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 Montana.

Social Security in Montana

Older Montanans count on Social Security benefits earned through a lifetime of work
- A total of 92 percent, or 145,328, of older Montana residents received Social Security in 2012. The average annual benefit was $14,200.
- Social Security accounted for 61 percent of the typical older Montanan’s family income.
- Low- and middle-income older adults in Montana are even more reliant on Social Security’s earned benefit, typically receiving 88 percent of their family income from Social Security.

Social Security keeps middle-income older Montanans from falling into poverty
- Census data show about 8 percent, or 12,656, of older Montanans living in poverty.
- Without Social Security income, an additional 42 percent of older Montanans, or 66,691 people, would fall into poverty.

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

Medicare in Montana

Medicare provides guaranteed health coverage, but out-of-pocket costs are high
- On average, Montana’s Medicare beneficiaries spent an estimated $3,335 on out-of-pocket health care costs in 2012.
- In 2012, older Montana adults enrolled in Medicare spent, on average, an estimated 11 percent of their income on out-of-pocket health care costs.

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

Medicare plays an important role in Montana’s economy
- The Medicare program spent an estimated $1.1 billion on health care services for 153,900 older Montanans in 2012.