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

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 Pennsylvania.

Social Security in Pennsylvania

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

- A total of 93 percent, or 1,894,316, of older Pennsylvania residents received Social Security in 2012. The average annual benefit was $15,400.
- Social Security accounted for 55 percent of the typical older Pennsylvanian’s family income.
- Low- and middle-income older adults in Pennsylvania 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 Pennsylvanians from falling into poverty

- Census data show about 9 percent, or 178,621, of older Pennsylvanians living in poverty.
- Without Social Security income, an additional 38 percent of older Pennsylvanians, or 753,410 people, would fall into poverty.

Social Security plays an important role in Pennsylvania’s economy

- Social Security provided $37.5 billion in benefits to all Pennsylvanians and $28.7 billion in benefits to Pennsylvanians aged 65 and older in 2012.

Medicare in Pennsylvania

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

- On average, Pennsylvania’s Medicare beneficiaries spent an estimated $4,920 on out-of-pocket health care costs in 2012.
- In 2012, older Pennsylvania adults enrolled in Medicare spent, on average, an estimated 15 percent of their income on out-of-pocket health care costs.

Medicare provides peace of mind for older Pennsylvanians

- Nearly 98 percent of older Pennsylvanians were enrolled in Medicare in 2011.

Medicare plays an important role in Pennsylvania’s economy

- The Medicare program spent an estimated $20.2 billion on health care services for 1,991,792 older Pennsylvanians in 2012.