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

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 Wyoming.

Social Security in Wyoming

Older Wyomongites count on Social Security benefits earned through a lifetime of work
- A total of 92 percent, or 69,518, of older Wyoming residents received Social Security in 2012. The average annual benefit was $15,000.
- Social Security accounted for 47 percent of the typical older Wyomingite’s family income.
- Low- and middle-income older adults in Wyoming are even more reliant on Social Security’s earned benefit, typically receiving 74 percent of their family income from Social Security.

Social Security keeps middle-income older Wyomongites from falling into poverty
- Census data show about 7 percent, or 4,269, of older Wyomongites living in poverty.
- Without Social Security income, an additional 35 percent of older Wyomongites, or 22,218 people, would fall into poverty.

Social Security plays an important role in Wyoming’s economy
- Social Security provided $1.3 billion in benefits to all Wyomongites and $1 billion in benefits to Wyomongites aged 65 and older in 2012.

Medicare in Wyoming

Medicare provides guaranteed health coverage, but out-of-pocket costs are high
- In 2012, older Wyoming 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 Wyomongites
- Nearly 97 percent of older Wyomongites were enrolled in Medicare in 2011.

Medicare plays an important role in Wyoming’s economy
- The Medicare program spent an estimated $0.6 billion on health care services for 73,556 older Wyomongites in 2012.