Medicare is the health insurance program for people age 65 or older. Younger people who have disabilities and those who have permanent kidney failure are also eligible. The program helps with the cost of health care, but it does not cover all medical expenses or the cost of most long-term care. The program is financed by a portion of the payroll taxes paid by workers and their employers and by monthly premiums deducted from Social Security checks. It pays for inpatient care in a hospital or skilled nursing facility as well as doctors’ services and medical services and supplies.

The majority of people in Medicare in Megalopolis as within the rest of the country are aged rather than classified as disabled. Less than 13% of people in the Medicare program in Megalopolis are classified as disabled, with figures ranging from 6.3% in Nantucket, MA to 18.2% in Berkeley, WV.

Across the region there is not a great deal of variation in the percent of the population enrolled in Medicare, Montgomery, PA for example with a figure of 16.5% is very typical. What does stand out is a cluster of places in the Washington metro areas with very high figures. Fredericksburg, Fairfax City and Falls Church all in Virginia have figures of 42.8%, 41.1% and 36.6% respectively. These small areas have a concentration of retired people.

Data Source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, "Medicare County Enrollment as of July 1, 1999 - Aged and Disabled 3/2000 update".
Data obtained through University of Virginia Library Geospatial and Statistical Data Center (http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/ccdb/).