

**The Challenges to Social Security and Medicare**  
**Presented by Margie Metzler to CCS meeting**  
**September 15, 2010**

**Social Security:**

- Constant challenges through the century: great book, *the Battle for Social Security*, Nancy J. Altman 2005. There have been people trying to destroy Social Security since it was first enacted.
- Before Social Security, according to the book, "...every state but New Mexico had poorhouses (sometimes called almshouses or poor farms.)
  - Most were elderly.
  - Most of the "inmates," as they were often labeled, entered the poorhouse late in life, having been independent wage earners until that point.. (One study reporting in 1910) found, for example, that only 1 percent of the residents had entered the almshouse before the age of 40; 92 percent entered after age 60....
  - even in a progressive state, the conditions were abysmal.... Privacy, even in the most intimate affairs of life, is impossible; married couples are... generally separated, and all the inmates are regimented as though in a prison or penal colony...
  - private possessions, other than the clothes on the back, are almost out of the question, since individual bureaus, closets, tables or other articles of furniture, outside of a bed, are generally not provided."