out-of-hospital prescription drugs, however, are not covered by the present Medicare law, and it has been necessary for elderly patients to utilize other sources.

Income. In 1966, half of the families headed by an elderly individual had total incomes--including Social Security payments--of less than $3,645, or $70 a week. For elderly men and women living alone, or with someone not a relative, more than half had incomes of less than $1,500, or about $30 a week.

Assets. Recent studies have shown that the average per capita amount of savings and other assets held by the elderly is about $15,000.

But 30 per cent of the elderly have assets of less than $1,000 apiece. For them, a serious illness could wipe out their meager savings in a few months.

Health Insurance. Health insurance through Blue Cross, Blue Shield, commercial insurance companies, group practice plans and other organizations is available to many of those over the age of 65, but provision of prescription drugs--except to hospitalized patients--is limited.