Overview

This bill modifies the duties of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Services division, and strikes a requirement that the Equipment Distribution Program (EDP) have purchasing guidelines specifically to mitigate the economic harm that the EDP may cause local retailers and dispensers.

Section

1  Department of Human Services duties. (Amends § 237.51, subd. 5a.) Strikes a requirement that the Department of Human Services (DHS) develop guidelines so that DHS purchases some of the communication devices for the state-operated Equipment Distribution Program (EDP) from local sources, if otherwise the local retailers and dispensers would be economically harmed by the EDP. (The EDP makes long-term loans of special telephone equipment at no cost to qualified Minnesotans who have difficulty using a standard telephone.)

2  Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Services Division. (Amends § 256C.233, subd. 1.) Adds the Health Department as a fourth member of the interagency management team for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Service Division, a multi-agency organizational unit. (Under current law the three members of the interagency management team for the Division are DHS, the Department of Children, Families and Learning, and the Department of Economic Security.)

3  Responsibilities. (Amends § 256C.233, subd. 2.) Adds to the duties of the Deaf and Hard-of Hearing Services Division. Allows the Division to provide a coordinated statewide system of interpreting services, in addition to or instead of a system of interpreter referral services.

4  Interpreter services. (Amends § 256C.25)

Subd. 1. Establishment. Permits the Deaf and Hard-of Hearing Services Division to maintain and coordinate a statewide system of interpreting services, in addition to or instead of a system of interpreter referral services.

Also strikes the current law requirement which mandates that the Division contracts for these services within the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area. Instead, gives the
Division the option to contract for the maintenance and coordination of the services in the Twin Cities metro area, as it has under current law in the rest of the state.

**Subd. 2. Duties.** Adds interpreting services to the description of the Division's duties.