**Overview**

This bill expands eligibility for the senior drug program, by removing the age limit for Medicare beneficiaries, doubling the asset limit, and increasing the income limit to 300 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. The bill also establishes a sliding scale enrollment fee for individuals with incomes over 120 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. The bill also changes the name of the program to the "prescription drug program," requires the commissioner of human services to develop a strategy to provide information on prescription drug patient assistance programs to physicians, and makes conforming and technical changes.

**Section**

1. **Establishment.** Amends § 256.955, subd. 1. Changes the name of the "senior drug program" to "prescription drug program" and also replaces the term "qualified senior citizen" with "qualified individual." These conforming changes to the eligibility expansion in section 2 are made in several sections of the bill.

2. **Definitions.** Amends § 256.955, subd. 2. Makes Medicare enrollees, regardless of age, eligible for the senior citizen drug program, if they meet other eligibility criteria. (This has the effect of making disabled persons on Medicare who are under age 65 eligible; current law limits enrollment to Medicare enrollees age 65 or older.) Doubles the program asset limit to $8,000 for a single individual and $12,000 for a married couple or family of two or more. Raises the program income limit from 120 percent to 300 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.

3. **Application procedures and coordination with medical assistance.** Amends § 256.955, subd. 4. Makes conforming changes related to the expansion of eligibility.

4. **Cost sharing.** Amends § 256.955, subd. 7. Establishes an enrollment fee based on a sliding scale that is in addition to the annual $420 ($35 per month) deductible. The enrollment fee ranges from no charge (for persons with household incomes less than 120 percent of the federal poverty guidelines) to the full cost of coverage, minus the $420 deductible (for persons with
incomes between 251 percent and 300 percent of the poverty guidelines). Allows enrollees whose incomes increase above 300 percent of poverty following initial enrollment to remain enrolled, if they maintain continuous coverage and pay the full cost premium minus the $420 deductible.

5 **Reports.** Amends § 256.955, subd. 8. Makes conforming changes.

6 **Program limitation.** Amends § 256.955, subd. 9. Strikes language repealing the senior drug program if the federal government approves a waiver to provide drug coverage for qualified Medicare beneficiaries with incomes that do not exceed 150 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. Also makes conforming changes.

7 **Prescription drug program.** Amends Laws 1997, chapter 225, article 4, section 4. Removes an obsolete reference to funding caps.

8 **Information on prescription drug patient assistance programs.** Requires the commissioner of human services to work with the board of medical practice and the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America to develop a strategy to provide information on prescription drug patient assistance programs to all physicians in the state.

9 **Instruction to revisor.** Directs the revisor to change references to the "senior citizen drug program" to "prescription drug program."

10 **Appropriation.** Appropriates money from the general fund to the commissioner of human services for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2001, to fund the prescription drug program.