

## **Kristen Beiers-Jones Oral testimony in support of SB 698: History and Introduction**

Chair Monnes Anderson, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and members of the committee I would first like to say thank you for allowing me to testify today in support of Senate Bill 698, promoting safe medication use by requiring that prescription containers have labels translated into a language that people can read.

I am Kristen Beiers-Jones. I teach nursing and other health professional students through the OHSU I-CAN program whereby the students manage a caseload of patients in the community, visiting them each week at their homes. The focus of my practice is with immigrant and refugee patients and we pay particular attention to the social determinants that impact people's health. My goal is to not just teach students to care for individuals, but to care for populations. They are to ask---how can we improve the health and well being of the communities we are working within? This bill is a result of asking that question.

We noticed that nearly 75% of our patients were not taking the medications as the provider prescribed. As we looked closer, we realized that much of it was due to people not being able to read their pill bottles, 100% of which were English labels. Photo X shows you a typical picture of students trying to help a Limited English Proficient (LEP) patient figure out her medications.

One of our clients was an Iraqi refugee whose 5 children had asthma which she described as developing after exposure to a bomb in Baghdad. They had been in and out of the ER and one had been hospitalized due to asthma exacerbation. In our initial intake visit we realized that she had mixed up the kids rescue and maintenance inhalers. This is a highly educated woman who spoke several languages , just not English.

This case inspired us to look deeper into this issue. We found that New York and California both have laws mandating that prescription containers have translated labels. We decided that not only should Oregon do the same, but we should do better. We researched the medical literature and interviewed many patients, providers and pharmacists. We accompanied our patients to pharmacies where often an interpreter was not called, even though this is a violation of the patients' civil right. We started to meet with some legislators and we are grateful for their encouragement to bring a bill to both the Senate and House. SO we are here today with the hope that you will pass Senate Bill 698. Several of my students are here to testify with more details about the impact of this legislation. Thank you for your time and service.