

Natasha Avalon Gardner Oral testimony in support of SB 698: Key components of the bill

Chair Monnes Anderson, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today in support of Senate Bill 698, also known as Safe Medication for All Requires Translation or S.M.A.R.T. Bill.

My name is Natasha Avalon Gardner and I am a nursing student from Oregon Health and Science University in Portland. I am here as a concerned citizen to strongly urge you to vote in support of this bill,

I'd like to highlight key components of this bill. To promote safe medication use, Senate Bill 698 requires prescription bottles to be labelled both in English and in a language the person they are prescribed to can read. This is known Dual-language. This allows both the patient taking the medication to understand the directions, as well as providers and caregivers who can read the directions in English.

Senate Bill 698 specifies that translated labels be attached to prescription bottles rather than given to patients with medications as printed off handouts. From my experience, I know that patients often lose paperwork unattached to pill bottles. Having the translations directly on the bottle significantly increases safe medication use.

Senate Bill 698 specifies that translated labels will be available in languages spoken by at least 0.2% of Oregon's population, which is currently 10 languages.

Finally, the bill states pharmacies must post signage about people's rights to an interpreter. My fellow nursing students working on this bill for the past 2 years have found that less than half of Oregon pharmacies call an interpreter when dispensing medications to our patients who cannot understand English and most do not post any signage. This is a violation of existing federal laws and we hope that the signage requirement in SB 698 will improve adherence to existing law.

A vote in support of the S.M.A.R.T. Bill will positively impact the health of many people in Oregon and will also decrease costly medication errors.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.