

## **Kate Ballard: Oral testimony in support of SB 698: Why this is important**

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, the SMART bill. My name is Kate Ballard and I am a nursing student from Portland. I am here to tell you why this piece of legislation is so important for **both** urban and rural Oregon.

- Approximately 222,000 Oregonians have limited English proficiency (or LEP). That is 1 in 17 Oregonians.

- LEP individuals are 2x more likely than fluent English speakers to experience medication errors.

  - We have numerous stories of people whose health and wellbeing have been compromised because they could not read the labels on their prescription drug containers – including children who faced life-threatening situations.

  - My peers will share some of those stories with you today, and copies can also be found in OLIS.

- As you can see in Figure \_\_\_\_\_, this issue impacts Oregonians in every corner of the state. In each of your districts, there are thousands of LEP individuals.

- Not only are medication errors harmful, they are also costly. According to a Harvard study, the average cost of a hospitalization for a preventable drug injury is \$10,000, totaling \$1.2 million a year for a single hospital.

  - The endorsement by 3 CCOs may be a reflection of this interest in cost savings.

- I have come here today on behalf of the refugees and other LEP patients who I have worked with as a student nurse. These people, and their children, are vulnerable to life-threatening medication errors.

- When I reflect on how this issue has impacted my own patients, and then consider the over 200,000 other LEP individuals across Oregon, it becomes apparent how urgent this issue truly is. Thus, I ask you to support SB 698.

- Thank you each for your service, and for your time today.