

Dear Chair Monnes Anderson, Vice-Chair Linthicum and Members of the Committee,

Please accept this letter on behalf of **the Oregon Health Equity Alliance (OHEA)**.

We are pleased to support SB 698, which would ensure that patients, providers and caregivers can read and understand medication labels by requiring pharmacies to provide container labels in both English and the patients language of choice. SB 698 will prevent harmful and costly adverse impacts to the 222,428 Oregonians whose preferred language is not English, and as a result, are currently unable to read the directions on their prescription drug containers.

It is clear that if you cannot read your healthcare provider's directions as to proper administration of your medication, you have a substantial risk of harmful results and the potential for further negative health outcomes. In fact, research shows that the rate of medication errors is twice as high for those for whom written or spoken English is not their primary language, as those who are able to read their medication container labels when offered in English. We are sure that the Chair, given her health professional background, deeply understands that patients' needs should be front and center when we are talking about patient centered care. We are thankful for the leadership of this committee.

SB 698 will ensure that patients and caregivers are aware of their rights, under federal law and state law, to access to interpretation when they are speaking with their pharmacist about proper administration of their medications. By requiring appropriate signage, SB 698 will inform all who come into Oregon pharmacies of their rights.

As **OHEA, one of the four regional health equity coalitions in the state**, we believe that health equity can only be accomplished when all Oregonians are able to meaningfully access health care and treatment options, including support for patients to read and understand their medication labels and fully understand their pharmacist's directions as to proper administration.

We urge the Committee to approve this important legislation and send it to the full House for passage.

Sincerely,



Zeenia Junkeer, ND
Director, Oregon Health Equity Alliance (OHEA)