



## **Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 698**

May 9, 2019

House Committee on Health Care

Deborah Riddick

Good afternoon Chair Salinas, Vices Chair Nosse and Hayden, and members of the committee. My name is Deborah Riddick. I am the Director of Government Relations for the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). We represent 15,000 registered nurses throughout the state, as well as our member organization, the Nurse Practitioners of Oregon. The ONA supports SB 698, which would require pharmacists to label prescription drugs in language other than English if patient to whom prescription drug is dispensed is person of limited English proficiency.

SB 698's translation requirement, in our opinion, is an obvious solution to a problem that negatively impacts patient outcomes and cost containment. That patients are able to read and understand what is prescribed, in a primary language that promotes adherence, addresses an essential medication tenet, under which nurses practice with fidelity: the right patient; the right medication; the right dose; the right route; the right time.

When patients are unable to understand prescriptions due to a lack of translation, they are less likely to comply with treatment. This delay in treatment increases costs related to disease progression, wasted prescriptions, work-related absences, and additional provider visits. This requirement will facilitate care that is in alignment with the quality improvement that is an indispensable component of our State's health care access expansion and CCO 2.0 initiatives.

In addition to decreasing costs, SB 698's requirement will address a discriminatory practice that leaves many Oregonians unprotected at a time when they are most vulnerable. If you can remember any illness that you have faced, which was so serious that it required medication, you can also remember what a relief it was to finally be able to regain your health. Now imagine, if that medication was in Swahili or Kaixana or Dumi. Essentially, it's as if your provider evaluated your condition, identified and prescribed an appropriate treatment, and then that prescription was withheld from you. Our residents and their communities deserve better. We should do better. We can do better.

To require translation of prescriptions ensures that every patient receives the patient-centered care she or he deserves. It respects the prescribing professional's judgment and patient relationship. It empowers pharmacists with tools to provide equitable support. It helps to control costs and prevent waste. For these reasons, and many more, we support SB 698 because it aligns with our mission to support quality care and healthy communities in the State of Oregon; we hope it aligns with your vision for the state, as well, and that you will support and pass this bill.