

# SB 698: S.M.A.R.T. Bill Safe Medication for All Requires Translation

*"The only difference between a medicine and a poison is understanding how to use it" –  
Maggie Wells, MD, MPP*

SB 698 would require pharmacies in Oregon to provide prescription container labels in both English and a readable language for patients with **limited English proficiency (LEP)**. The bill provides the Board of Pharmacy the authority to implement the program and allow waivers for pharmacies not ready as of the effective date.

There are approximately **222,000 LEP Oregonians**, or roughly 1 out of every 17 state residents, who cannot read the directions for their prescription medications.

*"SB 698's requirement will address a discriminatory practice that leaves many Oregonians unprotected at a time when they are most vulnerable" –  
Oregon Nurses Association*

Pharmacists, nurses and physicians testified in support of SB 698 at the hearing, sharing stories of patients who could not read their own, or their children's, medication bottles, resulting in **life-threatening consequences**. In fact, one out of five emergency room visits is due to a preventable medication error.

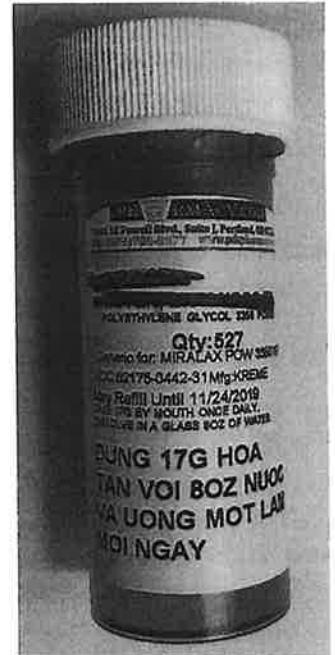
*"SB 698 is a vital step towards providing safe and appropriate care [...] This bill will help prevent accidental misuse of prescription medications that all too often lead to severe health risk, adverse effects, and even death" – Brian L. Michael, PharmD*

The average cost of **just one hospitalization due to a medication error is \$10,000**. The average cost to provide prescription container labels in 14 different languages is \$70/month. SB 698 will protect patients and reduce costs.

## Supporting organizations:

AllCare Health CCO, Inc.  
PacificSource CCO  
CareOregon  
Oregon Health Equity Alliance  
Oregon Public Health Association  
Building Power for Communities of Color  
Cascade AIDS Project  
Oregon Psychological Association  
Coalition of Community Health Centers  
McKenzie Pediatrics  
Nurses for Single Payer.

Oregon Nurses Association  
Oregon Academy of Family Physicians  
Catholic Charities  
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization  
Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon  
Metropolitan Alliance for Common Good  
Oregon Latino Health Coalition  
Portland Meet Portland  
Passport to Languages, Inc.  
SO Health-E Coalition  
Somali American Council of Oregon



From the Desk of *Laurie Monnes Anderson*