



245 SW Bancroft Street, Suite E  
Portland, OR 97239

March 5, 2019

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

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Oregon Latino Health Coalition.

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 a language that the patient can read. SB 698 will prevent harmful and costly adverse impacts to the 222,428 Oregonians who have limited English proficiency, and as a result, are currently unable to read the directions on their prescription drug containers. It is common sense 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. In fact, research shows that the rate of medication errors is twice as high for those with limited English proficiency as those who are able to read their medication container labels.

In addition, 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.

Founded in 2004, The Oregon Latino Health Coalition is the only health policy advocacy organization in Oregon dedicated to eliminating health disparities affecting Oregon's Latinx community. We envision a community where Latinx Oregonians experience wellness and access to culturally responsive comprehensive health care. According to the Latinos in Oregon report of 2016, the Latino population in Oregon is growing faster than the national rate, "12 percent of the state's population is now Latino, representing 72 percent growth since 2000." The majority of Oregon Latinos speak Spanish at home. As a statewide organization that represents Latinx Oregonians, we believe that health equity can only be accomplished when all Oregonians are able to read and understand their medication labels.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Olivia Quiroz", written over a horizontal line.

Olivia Quiroz  
Executive Director  
Oregon Latino Health Coalition