



DA: March 11, 2019  
TO: Senate Committee on Health Care  
FR: Cascade AIDS Project, Prism Health  
RE: In support of Senate Bill 698

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

My name is Peter Parisot and I am the Deputy Executive Director of the Cascade AIDS Project, Oregon's largest and oldest AIDS Service organization, and Prism Health. We have been providing services to individuals living with or affected by HIV for 35 years. Prism Health is our LGBTQ+ focused primary care clinic that provides the community with the safe and affirming health care that they need and deserve. Collectively our mission is to support and empower all people with or affected by HIV, reduce stigma, and provide the LGBTQ+ community with compassionate healthcare.

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.

In Multnomah County, where about half of people living with HIV in Oregon are residents, 16% of HIV-positive individuals have limited English-language skills. Overall, about 18% of Multnomah County residents have limited English proficiency, a rate that is reflective of the patients we serve at our primary care clinic. SB 698 will prevent harmful and costly adverse impacts for people living with HIV with limited English proficiency that are currently unable to read the directions on their prescription drug containers. 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.

Thank you for your time and consideration and urge your support for SB 698.

With Gratitude,  
Peter Parisot