



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

**Oregon Board of Pharmacy**  
800 NE Oregon Street, Suite 150  
Portland, OR 97232  
Phone: 971 / 673-0001  
Fax: 971 / 673-0002

E-mail: [pharmacy.board@state.or.us](mailto:pharmacy.board@state.or.us)  
Web: [www.pharmacy.state.or.us](http://www.pharmacy.state.or.us)

May 8, 2019

To: House Committee on Health Care  
From: Joe Schnabel, Pharm.D., R.Ph.  
Executive Director, Oregon Board of Pharmacy  
Re: Senate Bill 698

The mission of the Oregon Board of Pharmacy is to promote, preserve and protect the public health, safety and welfare. The goal of Senate Bill 698 is fully consistent with that mission by providing persons with limited English proficiency prescription medications with directions for use in a language that they can read and understand. Allowing the Board of Pharmacy to adopt rules to tailor the specific languages to the populations of various Oregon communities and revising the rules as language translation and pharmacy computer technology advances will provide the flexibility necessary for successful implementation.

Board of Pharmacy staff have worked with Representative Alonso Leon and Senator Monnes Anderson on SB 698 to help achieve language that will allow successful implementation of its provisions. Currently, there are several language translation services that would be able to provide many of the languages required by Oregonians with limited English proficiency. There is a concern by pharmacies as to whether all required languages would be available prior to implementation of SB 698.

Prescription label translation regulations adopted in California and New York appear to be limited based on the realities of available technology. California requires five languages and provides translation of 15 of the most common directions in those languages. This allows all pharmacies in the State to provide at least the minimum level of label translation. Many pharmacies have gone beyond the minimum required by law. New York specifies a maximum of seven languages spoken by greater than one percent or more of the population of the State and exempts independent pharmacies.

The Oregon Board can adopt rules based on a minimum standard achievable with current technology and then could modify the rule as technology advances. The goal that "prescription drugs dispensed to a patient with limited English proficiency bear a label, or be dispensed with an informational insert, in both English and in a language that the patient can read and understand" can also be stated in the rule. It seems clear that technology will improve over time and pharmacies will move toward exceeding the minimum standard as translation services are incorporated into pharmacy information systems. Board Inspectors physically inspect each pharmacy in Oregon annually, assess compliance with rules and encourage compliance if gaps are detected.

The Board is committed to continuing to work with you on the successful implementation of SB 698.

*The mission of the Oregon State Board of Pharmacy is to promote, preserve and protect the public health, safety and welfare by ensuring high standards in the practice of pharmacy and by regulating the quality, manufacture, sale and distribution of drugs.*