

# Translated Medication Labels: Senate Bill (SB) 698, Pharmacy Survey, Resources, & the Process

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## Background

This PHP project is part of the on-going work of previous nursing students who identified a serious, but modifiable health risk to LEP patients who must decide if they are going to take medications with labels and directions that they can't understand.

- While providing interpreter services at the pharmacy service desk is already law as part of the Civil Rights Act, this is not widely known or enforced, nor does it address the labeling issue.
- As nurses we know that helpful medications can quickly become harmful if taken incorrectly. Compared to fluent English speakers, LEP patients have double the rate of medication errors (Harris et al., 2017). Medication errors also result in 700,000 emergency room visits and 120,000 hospitalizations every year in the U.S (Sears et al., 2016). This is how and why SB698 came into being.
- At the start of term, the bill had just passed the Oregon Senate and was sent to the House of Representatives.

## Pharmacy Survey

33 questions in Qualtrics to assess:

- Language service needs
- Pharmacy language service practices (pre & post bill)
- Randomly sample 70% of pharmacies within each county of Oregon
- Master list of pharmacies adapted from Oregon Board of Pharmacy



Pictured, I-CAN clients, right and below.

## Strategy and Goals

We began our work by creating a plan to:

- Gain support in the House
- Address concerns from pharmacists in order to reduce opposition
- Gather baseline data to show the impact of the bill if it were to become law
- Document the entire process in the form of a video to use as a teaching tool to show future nursing students how their work can change public policy in favor of population health

## Documentary Video:

- To empower and motivate nursing students to advocate for policy change. Especially since nurses have a responsibility to advocate for patients and are in a unique position to do it effectively because they are experts in their field and are trusted by the public.
- Nurses and nursing students play a crucial role in policy change efforts. According to Provision 7 in the Code of Ethics for Nurses, nurses must "participate as advocates or as elected or appointed representatives in civic activities related to health care through local, regional, state, national, or global initiatives (American Nurses Association, 2015)."
  - Nurses have been rated as the most trusted profession by Americans for the past 14 years (Seifert, & Joyner, 2016).

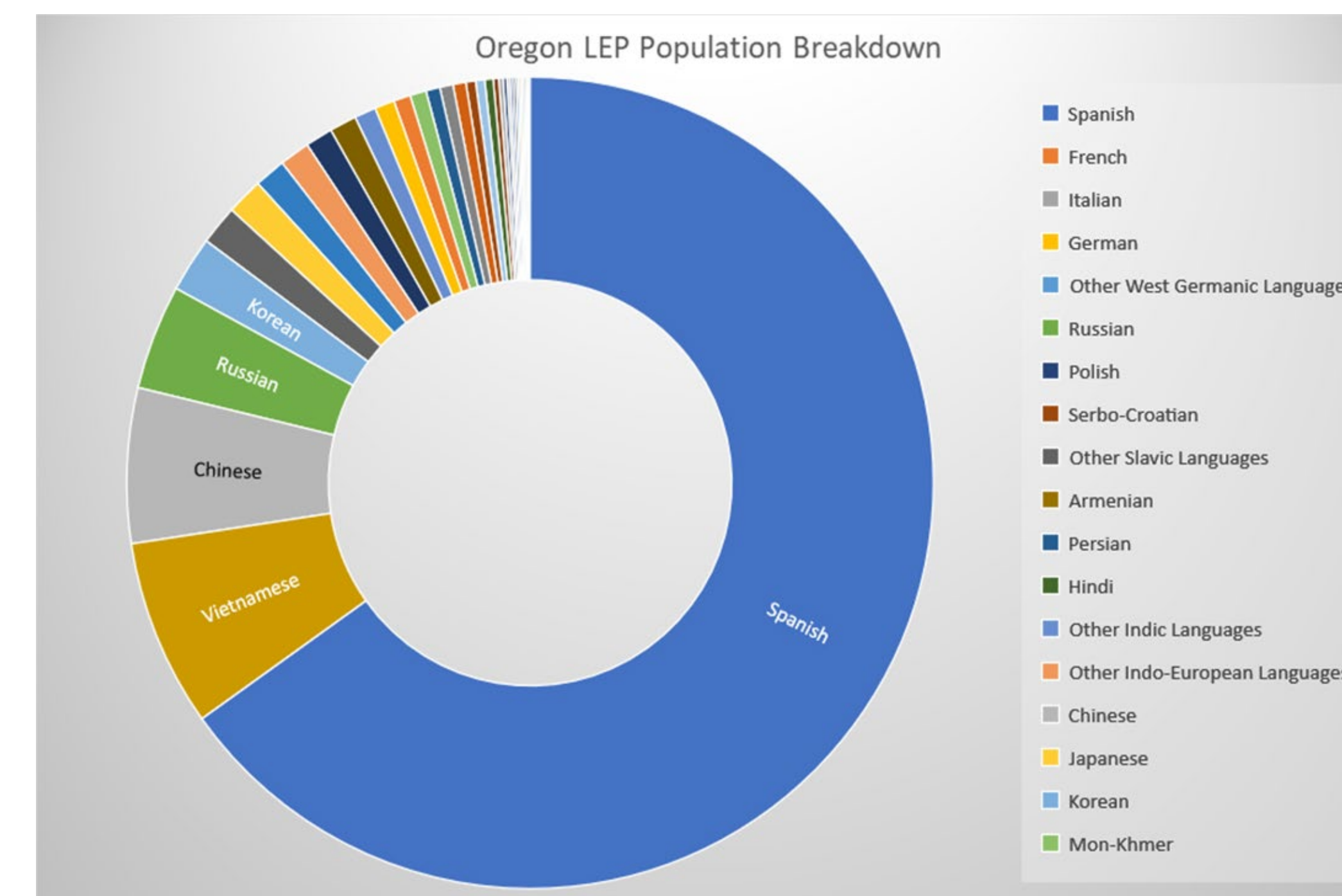
## What is SB698?

Senate Bill 698 is a bill that would require pharmacies to provide dual language medication labels on the medication bottle or container (in English and any one of the 14 most commonly spoken languages in Oregon).

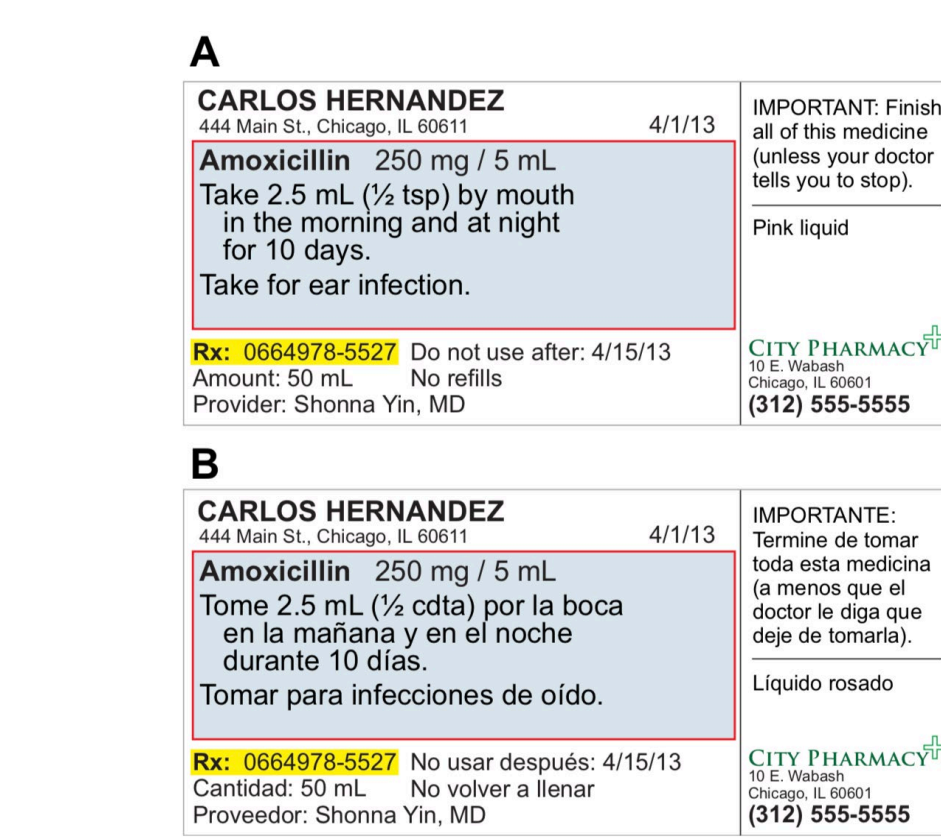
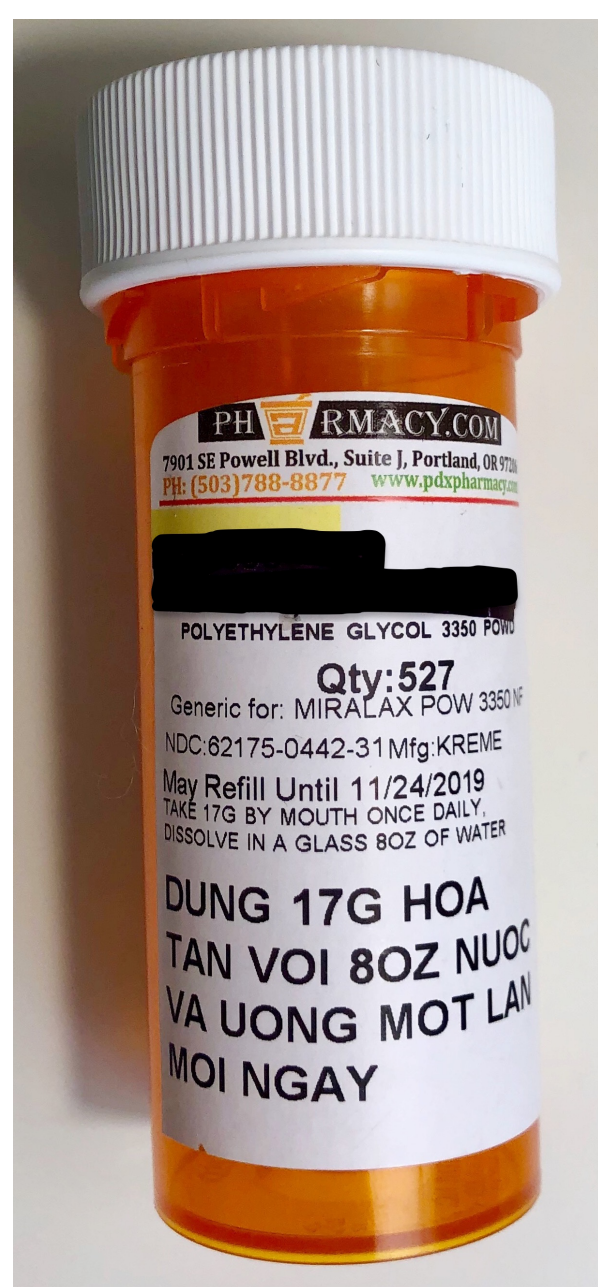
\*New York (NY) and California have already passed *similar* legislation, but neither state requires *2 languages on the bottle*. Although it has been found that in NY, the capacity of pharmacies to assist LEP patients improved significantly after the implementation of the legislation, such as by providing translated instructions (Weiss, 2018). Oregon's law would be the most progressive legislation of its kind in the nation.

## What is LEP?

Limited English Proficiency or LEP is defined by the US Census Bureau as anyone over the age of 5 who reports speaking English less than "very well."



Data adapted from US Department of Justice-Civil Rights Division (2017)



Above: Fictional example of a dual language prescription label adapted from 2. Right: example of dual language label currently being used by a Portland pharmacy.

## Stories of Impact

### Sample of Testimony before the Oregon House of Representatives

"I ask you to imagine what it is like to come home with a bag full of pill bottles you cannot read and be expected to just remember which pill is which and how many to take. This is a quote from Mary [an LEP client]: 'I have so many medications. I don't know what is for what. They just give it to me and when I get home, I put it in a bag and I take them all. I don't know what for. When I have a problem, they give me another medication. I can't read what it is for and I don't know how to take them, it's confusing. Medicine is supposed to make you better and heal you, but it can also kill you when you don't know how to take it or what you are taking.'"

-From the testimony of Bruce Monroe, Student Nurse

## Implementation:

### Addressing Concerns of Pharmacies

- Determine Cost: Upfront and ongoing
- Services Provided: phone interpretation, written translation, comprehensive software options or software compatibility/interfaces with EPIC, other medical records software, and label printing software.
- Quality Control Process = translation certification



## Meeting Our Goals

### Gathering Support:

- We successfully lobbied the healthcare committee of the House in order to set a work session in preparation for a vote. While the bill is still awaiting a vote in the House, some of us were able to testify before the House Committee to explain how this bill will provide safer healthcare practices and potentially save lives.

### Reducing Opposition:

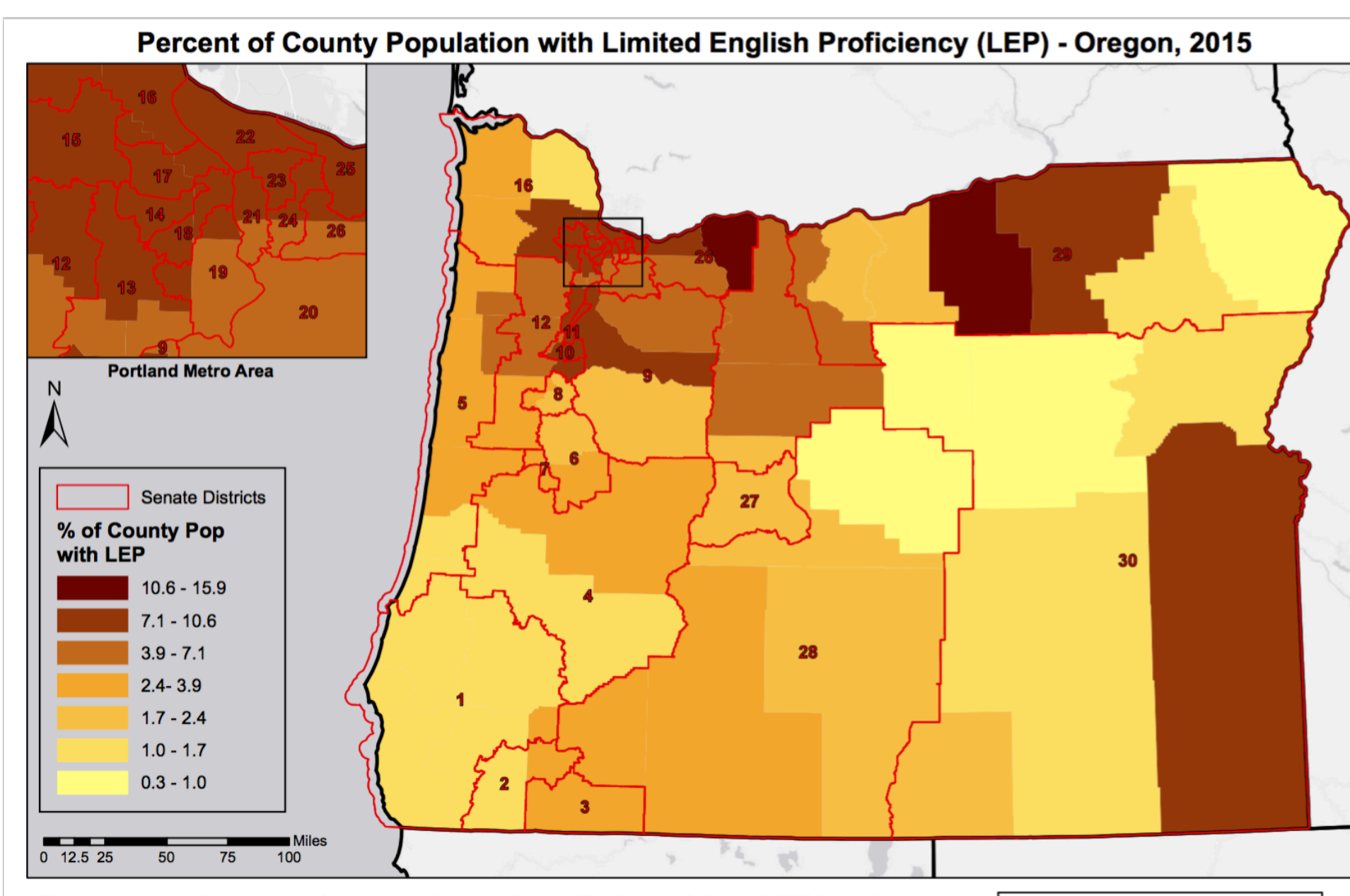
- We performed key informant interviews with vendors including software translation services, education services, and label designers.
- We used this information to create a "one pager" to explain options for implementation that cover a wide range of cost options, and service packages available to accommodate the needs of pharmacies whether urban or rural, mom and pop, or big chain store.

### Designing a Valid Survey:

- Working from the tools used to pass New York's legislation, we designed and refined a survey that would provide an appropriate random sampling of pharmacies in Oregon to determine what these pharmacies are currently doing to provide safe, appropriate, and understandable prescription information to LEP customers.

### Creating a Policy Development Learning Tool:

- We created an educational video to document our lobbying experience in order to inspire and empower future nursing students to take action to ensure better health for all.



This map shows the percent of the population with limited English proficiency (LEP) in each county. Senate districts are shown in red. There are approx. 225,000 LEP individuals in Oregon. SB 698 would impact approx. 152,000 LEP Oregonians.

Source: ESR, Oregon GEO US Census Bureau (2015). 916001 - Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over for the 2010 Census. Retrieved from https://data.census.gov

S.M.A.R.T. Bill  
Safe Medication for All Require Translation  
SB 698 H.R. 2001

## The Work Continues

In order to guarantee the passage of SB698, future student groups will need to continue lobbying legislators to ensure that the bill passes the House. From there, the bill will go back to the Senate to vote on the amendments made in the house. Students will have to work to meet any opposition and provide answers to concerns regarding the language of the bill or its impact. In addition, the survey of current pharmacy practices needs to be conducted in order to be able to show the "before and after" impact of the new legislation if it passes. Once the data is collected, it will need to be organized into a usable, meaningful form, analyzed and interpreted.



## Acknowledgements:



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