



## California Lawmakers Consider Requiring Rx Label Translations

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The California Assembly is considering a bill ([AB 1073](#)) that would require pharmacists to provide multi-lingual prescription drug labels and instructions when requested by patients, Capital Public Radio's "[KXJZ News](#)" reports (Bartolone, "[KXJZ News](#)," Capital Public Radio, 5/6).

### Background

According to census data, about 44% of California residents speak a language besides English, and more than half of such residents speak limited or no English. In addition, experts have estimated that about one-third of the three million California residents who have gained health coverage through the Affordable Care Act speak limited English.

There are no federal requirements that regulate medication instruction translations.

Following the passage of a state law ([SB 472](#)) in 2007, the state pharmacy board began offering on its website standard dose instructions in five languages. However, the law does not require that pharmacies use the translations, and many do not ([California Healthline](#), 8/1/14).

However, California pharmacies are required to offer verbal translations ("[KXJZ News](#)," Capital Public Radio, 5/6).

### Details of Bill

AB 1073, by Assembly member Phil Ting (D-San Francisco), would require pharmacists to use a standardized set of directions for prescription labels and make available translations in at least five languages (AB 1073, 4/28).

According to "[KXJZ News](#)," the languages would include:

- Chinese;
- Korean;
- Russian;
- Spanish; and
- Vietnamese ("[KXJZ News](#)," Capital Public Radio, 5/6).

Alternatively, the bill would authorize pharmacists to provide their own translated directions in place of a standardized set (AB 1073, 4/28).

Kimberly Chen, with the California Pan-Ethnic Health Network, said the bill would "help reduce medical errors and ensure that patients are complying with their prescription information."

According to "KXJZ News," pharmacists do not oppose the requirement to provide written translations. However, some are calling for more flexibility in the process for doing so ("KXJZ News," Capital Public Radio, 5/6).

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