

From: [Gustavo Rodriguez](#)
To: McFall, Julie@DCA
Subject: Certified in-person medical translators
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 8:52:08 AM

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Hello Ms. Julie McFall,

My name is Gustavo Rodriguez. I'm a pharmacy technician at CVS Pharmacy, a union member of UFCW 324, and a store steward. I'm writing to bring to your attention the urgent need for a standard of in-person medical translators at our pharmacy.

Currently, pharmacies rely on telephone translators when a patient speaks a language that the staff is unfamiliar with. However, this approach often leads to miscommunication between pharmacy staff, translators, and patients, especially when there's a poor phone signal or when the patient is unable to effectively communicate their needs.

By implementing an in-person certified translator program, we can ensure that our patients receive accurate and timely medical care. This program would allow pharmacy staff to directly interact with patients, understand their needs, and minimize the risk of sharing patient personal information without consent.

Furthermore, we believe that pharmacy staff should have access to this certification program without the financial burden of paying \$2000+ per class. We hope that the program will be reimbursed, allowing pharmacy staff to focus on their primary role of caring for patients.

Thank you for your time,

Gustavo Rodriguez
Grodrigue060@gmail.com
Pharmacy Technician

From: [Vincent Chairez](#)
To: McFall, Julie@DCA
Subject: Public Comment for November 5-6th Full Board Meeting
Date: Saturday, October 25, 2025 6:15:37 PM

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Dear Members of the California State Board of Pharmacy,

My name is Vincent Chairez. I am a pharmacy technician at a 24-hour CVS located near a county hospital, and I proudly serve as a union steward with UFCW Local 324.

I am writing to respectfully request that the Board consider creating regulations requiring worker standardized and accountable translation services in pharmacy settings—particularly by major employers like CVS. The need for certified bilingual staff is critical to ensuring safe and equitable care for patients with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

While I do not speak a second language, I work alongside coworkers who do—particularly Tagalog and Spanish—and their skills are essential to daily operations and patient care in our diverse community. We often serve patients late at night and during high-pressure situations where access to accurate in-person communication is crucial. This is not just a helpful skill—it is a patient safety issue.

Despite this, retail employers currently offer no consistent standards, training, or certification for staff providing translation. CVS does require employees to identify their language skills on name badges, which misleads patients into believing they are certified to interpret pharmacist consultations and DURs. Meanwhile, CVS' own policy (Module #800699, Providing Equal Access to Healthcare) says patients should not rely on “unqualified staff”—but provides no mechanisms for accountability or training.

There are possible solutions. A Spanish-language pharmacy course is available from the California Pharmacists Association, but it is not well-promoted.

<https://cpha.com/ce-events/on-demand-courses/spanish-in-the-pharmacy-what-you-need-to-know/>

CVS offers a Capella education program, but has an unaffordable upfront cost for the worker and therefore inaccessible to most employees. Local county hospitals and Kaiser already offer voluntary certification for bilingual interpretation—retail pharmacies can and should do the same, especially when language barriers can result in life-threatening medication errors. Kaiser goes as far and dictates that if their employees do not pass their bilingual terminology course, then the worker cannot translate medical consultations and DURs.

Referring back to the Module #800699, highlighting that CVS acknowledges that “colleagues like you are best able to access the needs of the patient and customers”.

Here is a study supporting in-person interpretation over remote methods, reinforcing the value of certified, on-site language access in pharmacy settings:

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12060873/>

CVS workers represented by UFCW Local 324 are ready to support the Board in developing accessible, affordable certification programs—just as we’ve successfully partnered with the CPhA through the vaccination certification program supported by state workforce grants. With similar collaboration, we can raise standards, improve outcomes, and protect both patients and workers.

If met with resistance, I encourage the Board to coordinate with the Department of Justice or the Office for Civil Rights under HHS, which investigates language access violations in healthcare under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. I look forward to your leadership in promoting equitable and safe pharmacy care for all Californians.

Sincerely,

Vincent Chairez

Pharmacy Technician, CVS

Union Steward, UFCW Local 324

From: [JOANNA RIOS](#)
To: McFall, Julie@DCA
Subject: Bilingual training/ certification
Date: Monday, October 27, 2025 4:27:56 PM

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Hello, my name is Joanna Aguirre. I am a Cvs pharmacy Lead technician and union steward for UFCW local 324 and I am a bilingual Spanish speaker. My first language was Spanish until I started going to school. I have a bachelor's degree in Spanish linguistics.

I am writing this letter because the board of pharmacy and Cvs will not approve the bilingual certification/ training program for pharmacy techs and clerks. From experience working in pharmacy and trying to translate for every Spanish speaking patient has been overwhelming. Working for Cvs and being a pharmacy technician for 10 years and still not being able to translate the right terminology for certain types of medicine and conditions is crucial. We need to be trained properly, get paid more and get certified to learn how to speak to patients regarding their medications. Being called consistently for translation and DUR because the pharmacists don't have time to grab the ironman and use the translation app. The pharmacists and Spanish customers would rather just use someone quickly to translate, but if we are not trained properly the pharmacist and customer don't know if they translated the right way and go back to what they were doing. There has been misinterpretations at work where customers could have taken the wrong drug or dosage and they have been explained incorrectly about the use of certain drugs. The Spanish speaking customers deserve the same quality of service and care that is received by the English speaking customers receive.!

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Sandra Pagan](#)
To: McFall, Julie@DCA
Subject: Medical terminology
Date: Saturday, November 1, 2025 9:54:54 AM

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Dear Members of the Board of Pharmacy,

I am writing to request that retail pharmacy corporations be encouraged or required to provide training in medical terminology for pharmacy staff. Understanding accurate medical terminology is essential to ensure patient safety, effective communication, and professionalism—especially when serving diverse communities.

By investing in this education, pharmacies can reduce errors, improve patient trust, and strengthen the overall quality of care.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,
Sandra Pagan
Lead pharmacy technician
562-706-2114
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Gladys Gonzalez](#)
To: McFall, Julie@DCA
Subject: Statement for language translation certification pharmacy
Date: Sunday, November 2, 2025 10:47:35 AM

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Hello,

I'd like to introduce myself My name is Gladys Gonzalez.

I work at CVS pharmacy as a Lead Technician and UFCW Local 324 member, steward, and bilingual speaker.

I believe a bilingual medical translation certification at CVS Pharmacy is essential to ensuring equitable access to healthcare services for all customers, regardless of language proficiency. Accurate and professionally verified translations help patients understand prescription instructions, medication labels, and health information—reducing the risk of medical errors and improving treatment adherence. By providing bilingual medical translation education, CVS would uphold federal language access standards, strengthens trust within diverse communities, and demonstrates its commitment to patient safety, inclusion, and culturally competent care.

Over my 26 years of employment with CVS I've witnessed several situations in which the patient wasn't receiving the correct information due to the person translating not knowing the correct words to use .

In one situations a person recived the wrong vaccine, the patient fainted and went to the ER.

If there is no one to translate the patient is consulted in English and they leave not knowing or understanding what was told to them.

Cvs has an app for translation but the staff hardly uses it because they feel like it takes too much time to use.

I've seen some staff members who said they speak Spanish and yet don't know the correct medical terminology. This results in patients getting the wrong information. Its mostly during DUR because when the information needed to

be translated is more difficult to do.

They're days when there is no Spanish speaking employee.

It is time to make the major employers in retail pharmacy raise standards for the safety of our bilingual patients and multi-race communities.

The majority of our patients in my pharmacy are mostly Spanish speaking.

So I ask the Board of Pharmacy to please look into having pharmacy staff members ,who are hired to speak their secondary language, be tested/certified so that no patient is left not knowing or understanding and avoid possible errors or fatal mistakes.

From: [Magdalena Huizar](#)
To: McFall, Julie@DCA
Cc: vchairezbusiness@gmail.com
Subject: Public Comment for November 5-6th Full Board Meeting
Date: Sunday, November 2, 2025 5:06:04 PM

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Hello!

I hope this email finds you well! My name is Maggie. I am a RX store associate for CVS pharmacy, UFCW Local 324 member and bilingual speaker.

I am reaching out in regard to the subject of having a sort of certification process in learning medical terminology for retail pharmacy.

I am a bilingual speaker, fluent in spanish. When I was initially hired, I did not hesitate to disclose my ability to speak spanish as I feel it is important to hire workers who are fluent in other languages as it is an excellent attribute to the retail pharmacy space. However, after working in the industry, sometimes being the only spanish speaker on shift, I quickly realized how difficult it is to comfortably and confidently assist patients in the counseling conversations with pharmacists or insurance issues without having had studied the proper terms for these important topics. For example, when helping patients who are looking for over-the-counter relief for their symptoms, I was having a hard time understanding their symptoms then efficiently translating it to the pharmacist, who often times had follow up questions such as “do they suffer from high blood pressure?” or, “are they feeling congestion in their chest or sinuses?”. In addition, difficult topics such as asking the patient to be aware of certain side effects to their medication that may need urgent treatment, or ensuring they watch out for sudden symptoms made present through interactions is a conversation that is imperative and must be had, but also is heavy on myself, as I want to ensure they are understanding me and we are on the same page. Terms such as “increasing heart rate,” “fatigue/drowsy,” or “shortness of breath” are just a few examples of translations i’ve come across in real time that I needed to relay to the patient that I had to look up via a translating app or studied post-shift.

I love helping my pharmacists relay their important messages to our patients, especially when there is a clear language barrier that only speaking in spanish will allow for an open form of communication. With that being said, I will continue to study these gaps I have in medical terminology on my own time, but I urge this conversation as a step in the right direction to assisting all the hard workers in our amazing, and diverse pharmacy space: The pharmacists, the associates, technicians, patients, and everyone in between.

I appreciate your time in listening to my experiences as a bilingual pharmacy member. I hope you have a great rest of your week!

Best wishes,

Maggie

From: [Araceli](#)
To: McFall, Julie@DCA
Subject: Public Comment for November 5-6th Full Board Meeting
Date: Sunday, November 2, 2025 6:35:15 PM
Attachments: [Certification Process Request Letter.docx](#)

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Good morning,
This is Araceli Lomeli Pharmacy Technician. Attached is my letter.
Thank you!

Hello,

My name is Araceli Lomeli, a CVS pharmacy technician and UfCW Local 324 member, steward, and bilingual speaker. I have been an employee at the same location for over 25 years.

The need for a certification process, for translating medical terminology is vital at a retail pharmacy, where communications and comprehension are essential to patients' safety.

My extensive experience allows me to explain why proper communication is essential. I have seen, first hand, how misunderstanding have lead to serious health scares and how non-English speakers seem confused as they walk away not truly understanding what they just picked up. When they do come back they explain to me that they felt embarrassed and shame that they did not understand, with complete accuracy, the pharmacist's consultation. As if it was up to them, the patient, to have complete understanding of what, the professional health provider, just explained. The burden of responsibility to understand should not fall entirely on the patient. Shame should never play a role in their interaction with a pharmacist and/or technician.

Some of the most important points are the following:

1. Patient Safety
2. Regulatory Compliance
3. Clear Communication
4. Accuracy and Risk Management
5. Support for Diversity and Trust
6. Enhances Professional Reputation

All these are align with showing customers that we care about them, that they are valued customers, and that they are safe in our care. I believe if this certification was available and implemented well, CVS and a retail pharmacy would gain the

trust and loyalty of their patients. And in doing so, they will keep coming back to us, when we show them our willingness to be professional, in their native language by using the proper terms in our conversation and have the education to properly communicate. Building rapport with our patients allows them to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance that they all deserve.

From: [Jesus Gutierrez](#)
To: McFall, Julie@DCA
Subject: Certification translating medical terminology
Date: Sunday, November 2, 2025 7:47:37 PM

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Hey there!

It's Jesus Gutierrez here. I'm a pharmacy technician at CVS store 9771 in Pico Rivera, and I'm also a UFCW local 324 member steward – plus, I'm bilingual!

I've been giving a lot of thought to how we can truly elevate the care we provide, especially given that our CVS y mas store serves such a vibrant and large Spanish-speaking community. I genuinely believe that implementing a certification process for translating medical terminology in retail pharmacies would be absolutely huge.

Think about it: if our bilingual team members had an official credential for their language skills, it would be a game-changer not just for our pharmacists, but most importantly, for our patients and the entire community. Certified translators are much less likely to mix up crucial details like drug names, dosages, or even simple instructions like "twice daily" or "on an empty stomach." This seriously cuts down on the risk of errors.

It's about preventing confusion that could lead to someone taking too much or too little of a high-risk medication, whether it's insulin, blood thinners, opioids, or even chemo agents. When patients receive instructions they genuinely understand, they're far more likely to take their medications correctly and complete their therapy as prescribed. Plus, it empowers them with a much better grasp of potential side effects, interactions, and important warning signs.

On our end, having certified bilingual staff would be a massive help too! It could reduce pharmacy liability, assist pharmacists with legal documentation, and generally lower the risk of malpractice. And let's not forget, a well-trained translator makes our workflow way more efficient, which ultimately means shorter wait times for our patients. Other actions it will prevent errors or adverse events reduce downstream medical costs for patients and the health system.

I just wanted to share this idea to improve patient care to know the importance of precise translation is critical to the community. Truly think it could make a difference for everyone involved.

Jesus Gutierrez
[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

From: [Melissa Acosta](#)
To: McFall, Julie@DCA
Subject: Public Comment for November 5-6th Full Board Meeting
Date: Sunday, November 2, 2025 8:20:02 PM

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Hello

My name is Melissa Acosta

I am a CVS pharmacy technician and UFCW Local 770 member, steward, and bilingual native Spanish speaker.

Spanish is my first language, I can read, write, and speak Spanish

However I don't feel comfortable or confident in my Spanish translations in the pharmacy Sometimes instead of using a word, I have to describe what I'm trying to say or even act it out.

The other day one of my pharmacists was trying to translate how to use an inhaler. She asked for my help, and I didn't feel confident in my translation. First of I've never used an inhaler and have never had to explain how to use an inhaler in Spanish.

I did my best to translate but I didn't feel comfortable translating . No one has trained me in Spanish medical terminology. I got lucky that the patient understood me.

The pharmacists speak a little bit of Spanish. They can understand numbers and will ask patients to spell their name. They do their best to translate but get stuck. This isn't fair to the patient. This is not quality patient care.

Explaining vaccines and side effects is tough. I have to look stuff up on my phone and read it to the patient. Then there are follow up questions.

Once a patient asked about medicine for aginas and someone confused said we don't have anything over the counter for angina. They confused throat pain with heart problems.

Just because somebody speaks Spanish doesn't mean they are qualified to translate in the pharmacy .

We should be trained and the ones that qualify should be doing the translating.

From: [Jeremiah Salumbides](#)
To: McFall, Julie@DCA
Subject: Public Comment for Nov 5-6th Full Board Meeting
Date: Sunday, November 2, 2025 9:38:38 PM

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Hello

My name is Jeramie Salumbides. I am a CVS pharmacy technician, a UFCW Local 324 member, steward, and bilingual speaker.

A certification process for translating medical terminology is critically important in retail pharmacy to ensure patient safety and increase patient trust in our company. Having certified translators reduces the risk of deadly errors from mistranslated instructions as it finally sets a standard for effective and accurate communication. Often times a non english speaking patient has specific questions that our team is unable to articulately answer so we must rely on using translation apps, which can unfortunately lead to mistranslation if improperly used. Having a certified translator has become a necessity in this industry with the growing cultural diversity of our patients. It is important that we adapt to the patients' language and literacy level to establish their trust and confidence in us. It is time that we create a certification process and recognize bilingual healthcare professionals as assets to the company. Ultimately, doing so will save lives, increase patient trust in our company, and reward bilingual healthcare professionals who deserve to be compensated for the value that they bring to the marketplace.

- Jeramie Salumbides