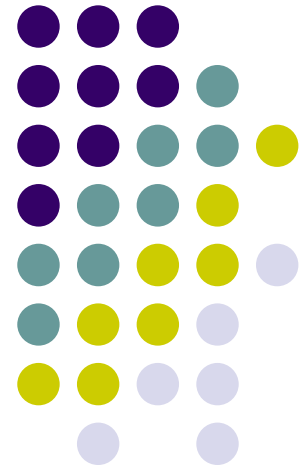


The SB 472 Process: California's Path to Safer Medicine Labels

Ramón Castellblanch, Ph.D.
San Francisco State

7th Annual Nat'l Health Communication Conf.
American College of Physicians Foundation
November 19, 2008

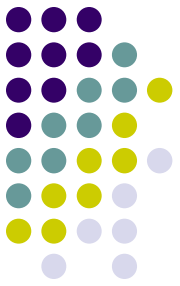


2005 - Senate Concurrent Resolution 49 (Speier)

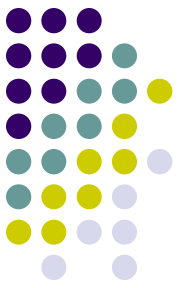


- Created a panel to study the causes of medication errors
- Recommend changes in the health care system that would reduce errors associated with the delivery of prescription and over-the-counter medication to consumers
- Could promote state funding for pharmacists

2006 - Medication Errors Panel



- Legislative leaders appointed representatives of insurance and pharmaceutical industry, health care professionals, consumers
- Final recommendations included standardizing prescription drug labels in California



2007 - SB 472 (Corbett)

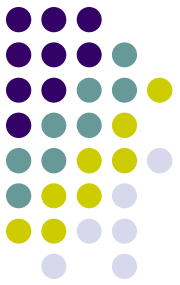
- Sponsored by the Latino Coalition for a Healthy California, Gray Panthers California, and Senior Action Network
- LCHC sees need for standardized Spanish and other language labels
- Panel similar to SCR 49 panel proposed to recommend safer, standardized Rx labels to CA Board of Pharmacy for action
- Standardized label required in 2009

SB 472 Amended



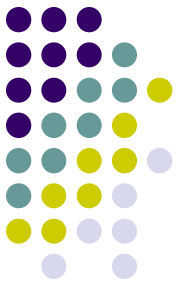
- Some Republican opposition on senate floor
- Board director objected to advisory panel
- Bill amended to give the board the task of developing a safer, standardized prescription drug label
- Standardized label requirement pushed back to 2011

SB 472 Amended



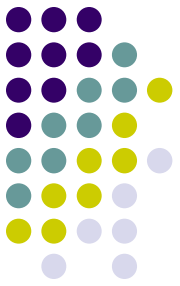
- Board required to hold public hearings statewide on label safety, separate from its normally scheduled hearings
- Also required to use medical literacy research
- Enacted October 11, 2007

First Attempt at Board Hearing



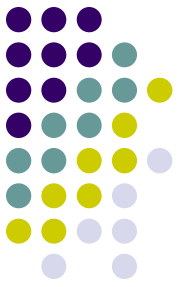
- Saturday, April 12, 2008
- Author's East Bay district
- Not connected to any senior event
- Few consumers in attendance

Outcome of First Hearing



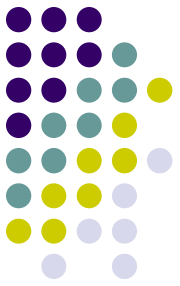
- Board looking for public comment, not research findings
- Representatives of industry and health care professions dominated discussion
- Comments not focused on literature on label safety research
- No similar hearings planned

Second Approach to Hearings



- SAN allied with California Alliance of Retired Americans
- CARA has annual convention attended by hundreds of politically active seniors
- CARA has chapters called CARA Action Teams (CATs) meeting monthly around California

CARA Convention Workshops



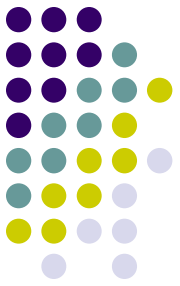
- October 12, 2008
- Two sessions
- 75 minutes each
- One public member of board of pharmacy attended
- 30-40 seniors in each session despite simultaneous sessions on state budget crisis

CARA Workshop Format



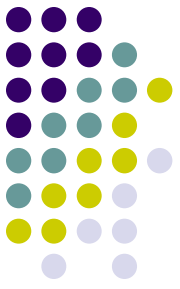
- Labels defined to include inserts, other guides and information dispensed with medicines
- Outline of literature on label safety research handed out and briefly discussed
- Butcher paper posted for recorder noting seniors' comments

CARA Workshop Outcome



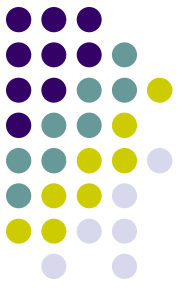
- Many seniors commented
- Comments focused on points raised by literature on label safety research
- Sessions favorably reviewed by seniors

Select Workshop Pts: Label Safety



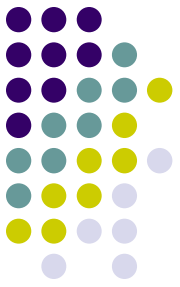
- Standardize bottle size make room for larger labels, flat-sided containers would be best
- Large print for patient's first-name; helps in households with more than one member using medicines
- Include inserts, other guides and information normally dispensed with medicines when dispensing free samples

Select Workshop Pts: Label Safety



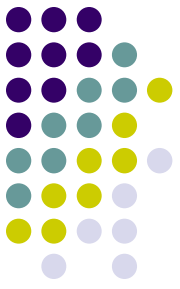
- Prohibit mail order labels from covering bottle labels
- Highlight directions (but not in yellow)
- Describe medicines on labels
- Explain when different colors are used for same medication
- Provide clear storage information

Select Workshop Pts: Label Safety



- Note dental care implications, when necessary
- Provide clear missed-dose information
- Bullet-point contraindicated drugs, foods
- Prominently display refill date
- Teach label safety in high schools

Next Steps in California



- Board distributing brief survey form
- Board to hear from Wolf & Cooper Bailey on November 20 about label safety research
- Board director and CARA discussing work together on public hearing requirement
- CARA has offered to utilize CATs to assist board in holding hearings