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Regence BlueShield of Idaho News Release

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Two Treasure Valley Hospitals Designated as Blue Distinction Centers

BOISE – Regence BlueShield of Idaho has designated St. Luke's Boise/Meridian Medical Centers and West Valley Medical Center as Blue Distinction Centers. Both St. Luke's and West Valley received the distinction for Knee and Hip replacement, and St. Luke's also received the distinction for Spine Surgery.

Blue Distinction Centers are part of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association's expansion of its Blue Distinction® designation.

"West Valley Medical Center is proud to be honored by Regence BlueShield of Idaho for our hard work toward providing comprehensive, high-quality joint health care in Caldwell," West Valley Medical Center CEO Kathy Moore said. "From our Orthopedics Service Line coordinator – who supports our patients at each stage of care, from pre-operative education to post-operative transitioning – to our highly experienced orthopedic surgeons, we are committed to helping our patients feel comfortable and at ease throughout the process."

"It's an honor to achieve this recognition from Regence BlueShield of Idaho," said Gary Fletcher, CEO of St. Luke's Boise/Meridian. "Achieving this designation is a direct reflection on the dedication and talent of our physicians, nurses, therapists and other health care providers who are focused on providing comprehensive care, while remaining committed to patient safety and quality."

The selection criteria used to evaluate facilities were developed with input from a panel of expert physicians. To be designated as a Blue Distinction Center, the following types of criteria were evaluated. More information on selection criteria is available on www.bcbs.com:

- Established acute care inpatient facility, including intensive care, emergency care, and a full range of patient support services with full accreditation by a CMS-deemed national accreditation organization
- Experience and training of program surgeons, including case volume
- Quality management programs, including surgical checklists as well as tracking and evaluation of clinical outcomes and process of care
- Multi-disciplinary clinical pathways and teams to coordinate and streamline care, including transitions of care
- Shared decision making and preoperative patient education

The Blue Distinction designation is awarded by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies to medical facilities that have demonstrated expertise in delivering quality healthcare in the areas of bariatric surgery, cardiac care, complex and rare cancers, knee and hip replacement, spine surgery and transplants. The program is part of The Blues® efforts to

collaborate with physicians and medical facilities to improve the overall quality and safety of specialty care.

The additional Blue Distinction Centers designations will bring the nation's number of Blue Distinction designations to more than 1,600—and this number is expected to increase in the coming years.

About West Valley Medical Center

West Valley Medical Center, Caldwell's community hospital, is one of the leading hospital facilities and employers in Idaho. This 150-bed, nationally accredited facility is dedicated to providing high-quality, cost-effective healthcare to Treasure Valley residents. For more information about West Valley Medical Center, please see www.westvalleymedctr.com.

About St. Luke's Health System

St. Luke's Health System is Idaho's largest and only locally controlled health care system employing more than 7,600 people. With hospitals in Boise, Meridian, Ketchum and Twin Falls, St. Luke's provides patients with unmatched care in specialized medical fields including cancer, heart and vascular, obstetrics, women's services and children's health care. In 2009, Thomson Reuters named St. Luke's as one of the country's top 100 hospitals. To find out more, visit www.stlukesonline.org.

About Regence BlueShield of Idaho

Regence BlueShield of Idaho is a leading health plan in Idaho with more than 210,000 members, offering health, life and dental insurance. Regence is the largest health insurer in the Northwest / Intermountain Region, serving more than 2.5 million members as Regence BlueShield of Idaho, Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon, Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Utah and Regence BlueShield (selected counties in Washington). Each plan is a nonprofit independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Regence is committed to improving the health of our members and our communities and to transforming our health care system. For more information, please visit www.regence.com or www.twitter.com/RegenceIdaho.

Note: Designation as Blue Distinction Centers means these facilities' overall experience and aggregate data met objective criteria established in collaboration with expert clinicians' and leading professional organizations' recommendations. Individual outcomes may vary. To find out which services are covered under your policy at any facilities, please call your local Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan.

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