



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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ST. LUKE'S RECEIVES ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY AND VASCULAR LABORATORY ACCREDITATION

Boise, ID (May 28, 2007) – St. Luke's Boise and St. Luke's Meridian's Echocardiography and Vascular Laboratories have attained recognition for their ongoing commitment to providing the highest level of care and quality testing to patients. Both laboratories have been granted accreditation by the Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Echocardiography Laboratories (ICAEL) and the Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Vascular Laboratories (ICAVL). Accreditation status recognizes the laboratory's commitment to quality testing for the diagnosis of heart and vascular disease.

One American dies every 32 seconds of cardiovascular disease – disorders of the heart and blood vessels. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, costing society more than 83.7 billion dollars each year in health services, medications, and lost work time due to disability.

Echocardiography is a complex imaging technique that relies on the experience and training of both the physician and sonographer. Cardiac structure and blood flow information provided by echocardiographic testing is useful in the detection and management of many types of heart disease. This noninvasive test has become one of the standard diagnostic tools in cardiology with an estimated 10 million echocardiograms performed annually in the United States – St. Luke's performs approximately 19,000 of these tests at its Boise and Meridian facilities each year.

The St. Luke's Echocardiography Laboratory is one of the first one thousand echocardiography laboratories in the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico to be recognized for its commitment to high quality patient care and its provision of quality diagnostic testing. Accreditation status signifies that the facility has been reviewed by an independent agency that recognizes the laboratory's commitment to quality testing for the diagnosis of heart disease.

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Vascular health can be affected when there is a reduced arterial blood supply to a part of the body, such as the legs or the brain. Stroke, a disorder of the blood supply to the brain, is the third leading cause of death and disability in this country, with 400,000 new strokes occurring annually. Each year, 2 million people in the United States alone develop deep vein thrombosis – blood clots in the veins. This affliction becomes life threatening for 500,000 of those people when the blood clot breaks loose and travels to the lungs. Early detection of these life-threatening vascular diseases is possible through the use of noninvasive vascular testing techniques performed within vascular laboratories.

St. Luke's Vascular Laboratory is one of a select number of vascular laboratories in the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico to meet or exceed the ICAVL standards of noninvasive vascular testing. During the accreditation process, every aspect of the laboratory's daily operations and its impact on the quality of health care provided to patients is assessed and reviewed. While completing the application, laboratories are required to identify and correct potential problems, revising protocols, and validating quality assurance programs. Participation in the accreditation process demonstrates the laboratory's attention to a high level of patient care and quality testing.

Founded in 1902, St. Luke's Boise Regional Medical Center is a 369-bed community hospital. St. Luke's Meridian Medical Center is a 104-bed community hospital that began providing a full range of hospital services in 2001. St. Luke's Boise and St. Luke's Meridian are both designated as a Magnet hospital, the gold standard for nursing excellence.

St. Luke's Health System is Idaho's only locally owned, not-for-profit health system. The system offers a full continuum of care through its four hospitals and more than 30 outpatient centers and clinics. St. Luke's Health System's 6,400 employees, 867-member medical staff, and more than 850 volunteers are committed to delivering the highest quality care to those in medical need regardless of their ability to pay. With a mission "To improve the health of people in our region," St. Luke's Health System provided \$138 million (including capital) in community benefit during its 2006 fiscal year. The hospitals of St. Luke's Health System have earned numerous national awards and recognition for excellence in patient care. For more information about St. Luke's Health System, visit www.stlukesonline.org.

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