



## **NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

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### **ST. LUKE'S CHEST PAIN CENTERS FIRST IN IDAHO TO RECEIVE ACCREDITATION**

**Boise, ID (February 1, 2006)** – St. Luke's Chest Pain Centers, located in Boise and Meridian, have been granted the first accreditations in Idaho from the Society of Chest Pain Centers (SCPC), which is an international professional society focused on improving care for patients with acute coronary difficulties.

St. Luke's opened both its Chest Pain Centers the spring of 2003 in an effort to create a dedicated area for observation and monitoring of patients with chest pain. This allows cardiologists and emergency physicians to determine if a patient's chest pain is related to a heart disorder, or another problem. It also allows for a more rapid diagnosis of the cause of the chest pain.

Following a formal review process by the SCPC, St. Luke's Boise and St. Luke's Meridian's Chest Pain Centers were cited as demonstrating expertise and commitment to quality patient care by meeting or exceeding a wide set of stringent criteria and completing on-site evaluations by a review team from SCPC. In addition, both St. Luke's Chest Pain Centers are ranked nationally. Since 2003, more than 2,800 patients have been cared for in St. Luke's Chest Pain Centers.

“These accreditations are an important validation of the quality of cardiac care we provide to our patients,” said Tom Ahlquist, MD, co-medical director for St. Luke's Chest Pain Centers. “It is critical that our emergency departments offer full-spectrum emergency cardiac care for our patients – this includes rapid diagnosis and fast track treatment before a situation worsens, which in the long run can prevent a severe heart attack from occurring.”

In addition to treating heart attacks, the staff at St. Luke's Chest Pain Centers use a process called risk stratification, which allows for necessary patient follow up such as stress testing and cardiology evaluations; staff also educate patients about the effects smoking and high cholesterol can have on the body. Patients are also encouraged to incorporate healthy lifestyle habits, such as healthful diets and daily exercise.

Heart attacks are the leading cause of death in the United States, with 600,000 people dying annually of heart disease. More than five million Americans visit hospitals each year with chest pain. The goal of the Society of Chest Pain Centers (SCPC) is to significantly reduce the mortality rate of these patients by teaching the public to recognize and react to the early symptoms of a possible heart attack, reduce the time that it takes to receive treatment, and increase the accuracy and effectiveness of treatment.

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The Chest Pain Center's protocol driven, and systematic approach to patient care allows physicians to reduce time-to-treatment during the critical early stages of a heart attack, when treatments are most effective. This approach also allows for more specific monitoring of patients when it is not clear whether they are having a coronary event or are experiencing some other type of medical emergency. Such observation helps ensure that a patient is neither sent home too early nor needlessly admitted to the hospital.

With the rise of Chest Pain Centers in hospitals across the country came the need to establish standards designed to improve the consistency and quality of care provided to patients. The Society's accreditation process insures centers meet or exceed quality-of-care measures in acute cardiac medicine.

To receive full accreditation from the SCPC, Centers must demonstrate expertise in the following key areas:

- Integrating the emergency department with the local emergency medical system.
- Assessing, diagnosing, and treating patients quickly.
- Effectively treating patients with low risk for acute coronary syndrome and no assignable cause for their symptoms.
- Having a functional design that promotes optimal patient care.
- Ensuring Chest Pain Center personnel competency and training.
- Maintaining organizational structure and commitment.
- Continually seeking to improve processes and procedures.
- Supporting community outreach programs that educate the public to promptly seek medical care if they display symptoms of a possible heart attack.

### **About St. Luke's**

Founded in 1902, St. Luke's mission is to improve the health of the people in our region by providing access to a full range of effective and efficient health care and related services, offered through a regional system. St. Luke's offers highly specialized regional expertise in the areas of cancer care, cardiac services, children's services and women's services. For more information about St. Luke's visit [www.stlukesonline.org](http://www.stlukesonline.org) or contact Catie Holm at 381-2894.

### **About the Society of Chest Pain Centers**

The Society of Chest Pain Centers is an international professional society focused on improving care for patients with acute coronary syndromes and related maladies. Established in 1998, the Society is dedicated to patient advocacy and focusing on ischemic heart disease. Central to its mission is the question, "What is right for the patient?" In answer, the Society promotes protocol-based medicine, often delivered through a Chest Pain Center model to address the diagnosis and treatment of acute coronary syndromes, heart failure, and to promote the adoption of process improvement science by healthcare providers. SCPC is headquartered in Columbus, Ohio.

For more information on the Society of Chest Pain Centers visit [www.scpcp.org](http://www.scpcp.org), or contact Robert Weisenburger Lipetz, Executive Director at (614) 274-9710 or [director@scpcp.org](mailto:director@scpcp.org).