



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **St. Luke's Boise/Meridian Chest Pain Centers Receive National Re-Certification**

*St. Luke's Exceeds National Standards for Treatment of Heart Attacks*

**BOISE** – The high quality of care provided for patients suffering from a heart attack has garnered a national re-certification for St. Luke's Boise Medical Center and St. Luke's Meridian Medical Center.

St. Luke's Boise and Meridian have the only accredited chest pain centers in the region and in Idaho. There are more than 450 centers nationwide certified by the Society of Chest Pain Centers.

Chest pain centers are housed in both emergency departments at Boise and Meridian. The centers allow for highly coordinated care for patients with chest pain, which has allowed St. Luke's to dramatically reduce the treatment time for heart attack victims.

The time it takes to diagnose a heart attack and complete the angioplasty procedure where a doctor inflates a tiny balloon in the patient's artery to open it up is called the "door to balloon" time.

Federal standards say that time needs to be 90 minutes or less.

St. Luke's chest pain centers have cut the "door to balloon" time to an average of 57 minutes.

According to the latest data released in March from the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services, 98 percent of the time, St. Luke's "door to balloon time" is below 90 minutes. That is well above the national average of 73 percent and above the 94 percent rate of the nation's top hospitals.

"Time is critical during a heart attack," said St. Luke's Idaho Cardiology cardiologist Dr. Samuel Bass, co-medical director of St. Luke's chest pain centers. "The sooner we can open a blocked artery and restore blood flow to the heart, the better the chances are that the patient will survive and have less permanent damage to the heart."

Reducing those times is a result of the coordination between the chest pain centers, emergency room physicians, cardiologists and the paramedics who respond to heart attack emergency calls. Emergency response units are now equipped with special EKG units. The data from the EKG tests on patients are then transmitted to the hospital where it is reviewed by St. Luke's Emergency room physicians.

"This allows us to know before the patient arrives whether or not they are suffering from a heart attack," Bass said. "With that knowledge we're able to quickly coordinate the care required."

Another goal is to raise the public awareness of the symptoms of a heart attack. The lack of awareness reduces the response time and can lead to people taking unnecessary risks.

"We do see an alarming number of people who experience chest pain and then drive themselves to the hospital," Bass said.

If a person is experiencing symptoms of a heart attack, it is always best to call 911.

"Failure to do that not only puts the person at risk, but can endanger other drivers if the individual experiences a sudden cardiac arrest," Bass said.

According to the American Heart Association, heart attacks are the leading cause of death in the United States. Each year, 600,000 people die of heart disease and more than 5 million Americans will visit hospitals with chest pain.

This is St. Luke's second certification for its chest pain centers. The recertification process takes place every three years. To be approved for accreditation, the Boise and Meridian chest pain centers had to meet a stringent list of criteria and demonstrate expertise in the following 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
- Continually seeking to improve processes and procedures
- Ensuring chest pain center personnel competency and training
- Maintaining organizational structure and commitment
- Having a functional design that promotes optimal patient care
- Supporting community outreach programs that educate the public to promptly seek medical care if they have symptoms of a possible heart attack

The recertification follows the December announcement that named St. Luke's as one of the nation's Top 100 Hospitals for cardiovascular care.

## **About St. Lukes**

*St. Luke's Boise and Meridian Medical Centers are part of St. Luke's Health System – Idaho's largest and only locally-controlled health care system employing for than 7,500 people. With hospitals in Boise, Meridian, Wood River 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 1968, heart surgeons at St. Luke's performed Idaho's first open-heart surgery. Today, St. Luke's Center for Heart and Vascular Health continues a 40 year tradition with the latest in cardiac and vascular care delivered by the region's top cardiologists, and cardiothoracic and vascular surgeons. In 2008, Thomson Reuters named St. Luke's as one of the country's top 100 hospitals for cardiovascular success. To find out more visit [www.stlukesonline.org](http://www.stlukesonline.org).*

## **About the Society of Chest Pain Centers (SCPC)**

*The Society of Chest Pain Centers is a patient centric non-profit international professional organization focused upon improving care for patients with acute coronary syndromes and other 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. To best fulfill this mission, the Society of Chest Pain Centers provides accreditation to facilities striving for optimum Chest Pain Center care. SCPC is headquartered in Columbus, Ohio. For more information on the Society of Chest Pain Centers visit [www.scpcp.org](http://www.scpcp.org)*