

Idaho Press Tribune, Friday, Aug. 7, 2009 – by Jesse Nance

## Change in store at Mercy?

*Hospital is in discussions about ‘alignment’ with other health-care providers, but no one will give specifics of what that could mean for patients*

NAMPA — The Catholic hospital group that owns Mercy Medical Center has confirmed that the Nampa hospital is in discussions with other hospitals and health systems about a possible “alignment.”

Mary Buchanan, a spokeswoman at Mercy, said she was not authorized to elaborate on what an alignment could mean for the hospital — the largest in Canyon County — and its patients.

According to a statement released by Denver-based Catholic Health Initiatives, the local boards and senior leadership at Mercy and two other CHI-owned Oregon hospitals — Holy Rosary Medical Center in Ontario and St. Elizabeth’s Health Services in Baker City — have been involved in preliminary talks about this possible alignment.

No one with the hospitals would speculate about any type of change that might occur.

St. Luke’s Health System, one of the state’s largest employers with hospitals in Boise and Meridian, would not rule out involvement in the discussions.

St. Luke’s spokeswoman Beth Toal said no formal relationship has been established between St. Luke’s and Mercy, but added that “St. Luke’s has had a working relationship with Mercy for many years.

“We continue to be open to exploring collaborative initiatives with providers throughout the Valley to improve healthcare delivery,” Toal said in a written statement.

*Here is the full statement from Catholic Health Initiatives:*

"The local Boards and senior leadership of Mercy Medical Center, Holy Rosary Medical Center, St. Elizabeth's Health Services and Catholic Health Initiatives have been exploring the potential benefits of a formal alignment of the three hospitals with other hospitals and health systems. Discussions are preliminary at this point but it is anticipated that the discussions will become more involved over the next several months. All parties have signed a confidentiality agreement. It would be inappropriate to discuss or speculate on the outcome of such discussions at this time. Should any discussions result in a conclusive decision, further information will be forthcoming."