

**Idaho State Journal, Wednesday, Aug. 10, 2011 – by John O’Connell**

## **Heart surgeon rescinds decision to leave**

*DeLaRosa listens to his patients, rejects job offer*

POCATELLO — Dr. Jacob De-LaRosa had finally reached a difficult decision to leave Portneuf Medical Center for a new opportunity on the East Coast when he began to hear from his patients.

The 41-year-old chief of cardiac surgery had already announced his resignation to PMC, and word spread as far away as Washington and Montana. He’s since rescinded his resignation, based largely on the pleas of his former patients.

One message — from a patient named Allison who was 18 years old when DeLaRosa operated on her — stands out in particular. The message came on his Blackberry in the middle of a meeting with his New York/New Jersey suitor, Catholic Health East:

“You can’t leave Pocatello! As you can tell, I heard that you were going to be leaving in the next few months, and I’m very sad to see you leaving, as a piece of my heart goes with you.”

DeLaRosa explained Allison had an infected heart. “She was going to die. We took her to surgery against the odds,” De-LaRosa said.

She’s since graduated from college. The plethora of similar messages from former patients convinced DeLaRosa of the importance of continuing in his effort to build up PMC’s heart program.

“Our work is not done here yet. We need to re-engage ourselves and continue the development of the hospital,” DeLaRosa said. “Truly the people of our community have inspired us to give back to the community.”

Staying in Pocatello will give DeLaRosa the opportunity to continue working in a new facility he describes as being the “most modern around the country.” He noted the well-respected Catholic Health East staff hoped he’d help them duplicate what PMC has.

“I envision this medical center in a global concept. This can be as good as the Mayo Clinic,” DeLaRosa said. “People always think that the grass is always greener and the pastures are always greener (elsewhere), and they’re really not. What we have in Pocatello is damn good.”

PMC spokeswoman Brenda Stanley said recruiting DeLaRosa was a coup for PMC, as is retaining him.

“We’re thrilled that he’s decided to stay. We felt lucky when he came here, and he’s done wonders for that program,” she said.

DeLaRosa’s book, called “The Heart Surgery Game Plan,” edited by Sandra Phillips and published by Liv-Right Publishing in Salt Lake City, is scheduled to be released in the next few months. DeLaRosa said he chose to write a book, detailing his personal strategy for success at surgery, based on the encouragement of local cleaning expert Don Aslett.