

**Twin Falls Times News, Saturday, Sept. 17, 2011 – by Kimberlee Kreusi**

## **St. Luke's Recognized as Top Performer**

St. Luke's Magic Valley Medical Center was recently recognized as one of 405 top-performing medical centers in the United States. This is the first time the Joint Commission, a nonprofit hospital accreditation organization, has listed top hospital performers during its annual hospital quality report. Only two hospitals in Idaho were listed.

Of the 3,000 eligible hospitals ranked, reputable medical centers like Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore and the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., did not make the cut.

"We knew our numbers were consistently high, but we didn't know we were going to be ranked this high," said Jim Angle, CEO of St. Luke's Magic Valley. "By receiving this recognition we are creating expectations and proving we can continually meet them."

The report focused on a hospital's ability to comply with performance standards. This could vary from giving heart attack patients aspirin upon admission to distributing antibiotics to surgical patients within an hour after surgery. "These measures determine if we did everything right," said Dr. James Rao, a hospitalist for the medical center. "We are focusing on making sure patients are on the right therapy."

Many of the standards are easy to meet in theory, but hospitals often fail to meet them, Rao said.

"You would assume giving out aspirin isn't that hard," he said. "But in intense situations like emergency rooms, hospitals have to work extra hard to meet those basic standards."

The Joint Commission surveys hospitals to determine if they meet accreditation standards. By receiving the commission's accreditation, hospitals are able to receive Medicare and Medicaid funding.

The commission also surveyed Cassia Regional Medical Center in Burley. While the hospital scored below the state goals in a handful of areas, hospital staffers had not had a chance to review the report when contacted by the Times-News.

While this report is not the only ranking the public should use to judge a hospital, it is an impressive display of a hospital's dedication to quality care, said Toni Lawson, vice president for government relations for the Idaho Hospital Association. "It's a great way for the community to know the quality of their hospital," Lawson said. "It really demonstrates the hospital is meeting these particular quality initiatives."

The report only listed the best hospitals in the nation, not the worst. However, knowing the hospitals with the lowest scores may not always be good for the industry, Lawson said.

"Hospitals compare themselves to the best medical centers and seek to achieve the best standards," she said. "Hospitals should be looking towards excellence instead of looking to those at the few that don't meet those standards."