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## A great place to work

COEUR d'ALENE – Patients receiving services at Kootenai Health facilities should rest assured, they are in the hands of people who have plenty of reasons to be happy about working where they do.

In a national listing of the top employers in the health care industry, Kootenai Health was ranked No. 1 this week among large companies with more than 1,000 employees.



*Bob McDaniel, executive chef for Kootenai Medical Center, mixes a blend of fall spices Thursday during his shift. The hospital cafe now offers its employees meals to go, one of a variety of employee programs that helped fetch Kootenai Health a top 20 ranking in Modern Healthcare Magazine's 2011 Best Places to Work in Healthcare nationally.*

Modern Healthcare magazine's 2011 ranking of the best places to work in health care also placed Kootenai Health 17th overall in the nation.

“There are 5,000 hospitals in this country and multiple health care providers that are not hospitals, so to be recognized like this is pretty significant,” said Dan Klocko, Kootenai's vice president of human resources. “The biggest part of it is the kind of culture this organization has fostered since its beginnings.”

Jon Ness, Kootenai Health CEO, said they believe in creating a workplace that fosters a healthy culture by supporting and recognizing staff. “Because of our dedicated employees, patients here receive the outstanding care they deserve and expect,” Ness said.

Klocko said Kootenai Health places employees first and works to create an environment that strikes a healthy balance between work and life for its 1,700 employees.

To compile the annual rankings, Modern Healthcare magazine works with Best Companies Group, a Pennsylvania-based firm that administers “best places to work” programs nationwide. Information is collected from employers about company policies and practices, benefits and demographics.

Employees are surveyed to assess the health care organizations' strength in leadership and planning, culture and communications, role satisfaction, working environment, training and development, pay and benefits and overall satisfaction. Kootenai Health received high marks across the board. Klocko thinks the health care system's financial stability contributed to its top ranking. “I think that creates a lot of security for our folks. It puts a lot of peace in our employees' minds,” Klocko said.

Kootenai Health's commitment to the health and wellness of its workers was also recognized by the ranking group.

Survey responses showed Kootenai Health workers like the affordable, on-site child care and fitness center they have access to. They appreciate Kootenai Health's annual family-friendly company picnic, its "Race to Lose" weight loss challenge, and the on-site farmers market offered during the warmer months.

"We value those programs," Klocko said. "They create opportunities for our employees to feel appreciated and valued."