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St. Luke's heart program wins national honors

St. Luke's Boise and Meridian medical centers are ranked in the top 100 hospitals nationwide for their care of heart patients, according to a survey released this week by Thomson Reuters. St. Luke's is the only Idaho Health System — and one of only three hospitals in the Northwest — to be featured in the 2009 Thomson Reuters 100 Top Hospitals: Cardiovascular Benchmarks for Success list, according to a news release from St. Luke's. St. Luke's Boise/Meridian also was named a top cardiovascular hospital in 2008, 2002 and 2003.

The study, now in its 11th year, examined the performance of 971 hospitals by analyzing outcomes for patients with heart failure and heart attacks and for those who received coronary bypass surgery or percutaneous cardiovascular interventions such as angioplasties. The study found that the 100 top hospitals cardiovascular winners have:

- 17 percent lower mortality rates for heart attack patients.
- 10 percent lower mortality rates for heart failure patients. • 27 percent lower mortality for bypass surgery patients. • 22 percent lower mortality after PCI.
- Fewer post-operative complications. Ninety-nine percent of patients were free of complications.
- Close to 12 percent shorter average hospital stay.
- 12 percent lower cost per case.

The study also found that the top performing hospitals perform more than 50 percent more cardiac surgeries than peer hospitals.

"These hospitals provide balanced high performance across cardiovascular services," said Jean Chenoweth, senior vice president for performance improvement and 100 Top Hospitals programs at Thomson Reuters. "This means they are providing high quality and highly efficient services at a reasonable cost in comparison to peers across the United States."

St. Luke's Heart now does more cardiovascular procedures than any other hospital in the state and consistently ranks well above the national averages in cardiovascular performance measures, according to a hospital news release. St. Luke's Heart has the state's only accredited chest pain centers in Idaho, and earlier this year the centers at Meridian and Boise were reaccredited by the Society of Chest Pain Centers.