



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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EXCELLENT RESULTS LEAD TO NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Bariatric Center of Excellence at St. Luke's to Benefit Patients

Boise, ID (August 9, 2007) – St. Luke's Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Clinic has recently announced that it has been named an American Society for Bariatric Surgery (ASBS) Center of Excellence. The ASBS Center of Excellence designation recognizes surgical programs with a demonstrated track record of favorable outcomes in bariatric (weight-loss) surgery.

According to a study released in July 2005 by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the number of U.S. Bariatric surgeries more than quadrupled between 1998 and 2002 – from 13,386 to 71,733. Faced with clinical evidence that the most experienced and best-run bariatric surgery programs have by far the lowest rates of complications, the ASBS Centers of Excellence program was created to recognize bariatric surgery centers that perform well, and to help surgeons and hospitals continue to improve the quality and safety of their care.

“Morbid obesity and its associated diseases, is perhaps the leading cause of preventable death in this country today. It affects nearly one in twenty Americans, and Bariatric surgery is the only treatment shown to be effective,” said Dr. Christian Oakley, Medical Director of St. Luke's Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Clinic. “We, in the health care field, must be able to provide safe and effective options to the millions of people who are looking for a solution. The ASBS has gone a long way in that direction with the new Centers of Excellence program, and we knew that we had to be a part of bringing that to this area as soon as we could.”

To earn a Center of Excellence designation, St. Luke's Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Clinic underwent a site inspection during which all aspects of the program's surgical processes were closely examined, and data on health outcomes was collected. St. Luke's Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Clinic and other centers receiving the Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence designation agree to continue to share information on clinical pathways, protocols and outcomes data.

“St. Luke's commitment to providing the highest level of care and quality is evident in the designation we've received,” said Gary Fletcher, CEO of St. Luke's Boise and St. Luke's Meridian. “This is exemplified by the highly trained staff which includes everyone that cares for the patient from the pre-operative stages to the ongoing support groups after surgery.”

(MORE)

Obesity has become a significant national health issue, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reporting that 64 percent of all U.S. adults are overweight or obese. Morbid obesity is closely correlated with a number of serious conditions that severely undermine the health of overweight patients, including heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes.

A program's designation as a Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence is indicative of the Center's comprehensive commitment to a high level of bariatric care.

St. Luke's Health System is Idaho's only locally owned, not-for-profit health system. The system offers a full continuum of care through its four hospitals and more than 30 outpatient centers and clinics. St. Luke's Health System's 6,400 employees, 867-member medical staff, and more than 850 volunteers are committed to delivering the highest quality care to those in medical need regardless of their ability to pay. With a mission "To improve the health of people in our region," St. Luke's Health System provided \$138 million (including capital) in community benefit during its 2006 fiscal year. The hospitals of St. Luke's Health System have earned numerous national awards and recognition for excellence in patient care. For more information about St. Luke's Health System, visit www.stlukesonline.org.

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