



## **NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

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### **TRUE OR FALSE: MAMMOGRAMS ARE EFFECTIVE**

**Boise, ID (November 21, 2006)** – Some would say that mammograms do nothing in the fight against breast cancer, however the statistics prove this theory wrong. The use of mammography can detect breast cancer about 1.7 years earlier than clinical or breast self-examinations alone and often before physical symptoms develop. Numerous studies have shown that early detection saves lives and increases treatment options for patients.

St. Luke's Breast Care Services recognizes that mammograms are extremely important to women's health and will be introducing full-field digital mammography (FFDM)– the latest screening and diagnostic technology available, to the Treasure Valley. The technology will first be introduced at the St. Luke's Boise diagnostic facility on December 4 and will be installed in phases at the other St. Luke's Breast Cancer Detection Centers (BCDC).

“Because breast cancer is the most common cancer among Idaho women we think it's incredibly important to offer the most advanced technology for breast cancer detection to the residents in the Treasure Valley,” said Loren Macey, M.D. Dr. Macey, a board certified radiologist at St. Luke's Boise Regional Medical Center, is fellowship trained and specializes in Breast Imaging. “Digital mammography differs from conventional mammography in how the image of the breast is acquired and viewed. Full-field digital mammography (FFDM) utilizes computer technology, which allows the captured image to be manipulated by the radiologist, allowing for enhanced interpretation.”

Now, a radiologist can magnify the images, increase or decrease the contrast, and invert the black and white values while reading the images. These features allow the radiologist to better evaluate areas of concern, including microcalcifications – small concentrations of calcium in the breast, which are an early sign of possible cancerous growth.

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To supplement this technology, St. Luke's has incorporated digital breast MRI Computer-Aided Detection (CAD), the first of its kind in Boise. Digital breast MRI CAD highlights characteristics commonly associated with breast cancer. When activated, it flags abnormalities to help the radiologist detect early breast cancer. In essence, CAD is a second set of eyes to support and enhance the radiologist's judgment.

From a patient's perspective, digital mammography feels identical to conventional screening mammography although women may notice shorter exam times and a reduction in call-backs to obtain additional images. Introduction of FFDM at St. Luke's BCDC sites will improve efficiency as well and increase the availability of screening mammography scheduling times for women in the Treasure Valley, making it easier for women to schedule more timely appointments.

Early detection is the most effective way to combat breast cancer. In Idaho, 95 percent of all women with localized breast cancer (when cancer is found before it has spread throughout the body) were alive five years after diagnosis. It is important for women ages 40 and older to get a mammogram every year.

### **Idaho Breast Cancer Facts**

- A woman's lifetime risk of developing breast cancer is 1 in 7.
- The incidence of breast cancer in Idaho has increased 47% in the past 35 years (approximately 1.4% per year).
- The National Cancer Institutes (NCI) "Healthy People 2010 Objective" is: to increase the proportion of women (in all states) aged 40 years and older who have received a mammogram within the preceding 2 years to 70%.
- In 2005, when the NCI did a "snapshot" of each state's success to date in achieving this goal, Idaho ranked 50<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states.
- In Idaho, approximately 70% of breast cancers are diagnosed at the "local" stage, meaning that the cancer is found **before** it has spread to surrounding tissues, lymph nodes or other organs of the body.
- In Idaho and nationally, Hispanic women are significantly more likely to be diagnosed with late stage breast cancers.
- Five-year survival rates for Idaho women diagnosed with late-stage breast cancer (where the cancer has spread to other organs) is only 12% - 15%.
- In Idaho, breast cancer is the second leading cause of death among women aged 35-54 (diseases of the heart are the leading cause).
- Although women with a family history of breast cancer, especially in a first-degree relative (mother, sister and/or daughter) have an increased risk of developing breast cancer themselves, approximately 80% of all breast cancers are diagnosed in women with no known family history of the disease.

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**Idaho Mammogram Facts**

- Approximately 14% of Idaho women aged 40 and older have never had a mammogram.
- Mammography can detect breast cancer about 1.7 years earlier than clinical or breast self-examinations alone and often before physical symptoms develop.
- An annual mammogram starting at age forty is the most effective way to detect breast cancer at an early, curable stage.
- Compared to when breast cancer is detected late, a woman's survival rate improves 83% when breast cancer is detected early.
- Overall, annual screening mammograms could prevent 15% - 30% of all deaths from breast cancer among Idaho women over the age of 40.

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