



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**St. Luke's Health System Recognized as a 2015 Qualis Health Idaho Quality Award Winner**

***Qualis Health Selects Four Idaho Organizations for Improvements in Healthcare***

Qualis Health, one of the nation's leading population health management organizations, has recognized St. Luke's Health System for improving healthcare quality and outcomes. St. Luke's and three other Idaho healthcare organizations will receive the Idaho Awards of Excellence in Healthcare Quality during a formal presentation April 16 in Boise.

"Our changing healthcare landscape requires increasingly vigorous efforts to improve healthcare delivery and health outcomes in Idaho and across the nation. The Qualis Health Idaho Quality Awards celebrate organizations that have transformed healthcare delivery for their communities – making a real difference for their patients and their families," said Jonathan Sugarman, MD, MPH, President and CEO of Qualis Health. "Their achievements exemplify the aims of improved healthcare: better quality of care at a lower cost."

The 2015 Quality Awards of Excellence in Healthcare Quality are awarded to the following organizations:

- *Award of Excellence: Hospital* – **St. Luke's Treasure Valley**, Boise, for their project "Project Zero / Joint Replacement Program"
- *Award of Excellence: Post-Acute/Long-Term Care* – **Kindred Nursing and Rehabilitation**, Kellogg, for their project "Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement: from Theory to Practice, Implementing the Five Elements to Fall Reduction"
- *Award of Excellence: Critical Access Hospital* – **Clearwater Valley Hospital and Clinics**, Orofino, for their project "Case Management of High Utilization Emergency Department Patients"
- *Award of Excellence: Hospital* – **Kootenai Health**, Coeur d'Alene, for their project "Safe Specimen Labeling"

St. Luke's award was for a collaboration of Project Zero and the Treasure Valley Joint Replacement Program - a two-pronged approach to prevent complications resulting from joint replacement surgery. The Joint Replacement Program is a collaborative group of orthopedic surgeons, physical and occupational therapists, certified orthopedic nurses, case management and social service providers. Project Zero is a multidisciplinary team of surgeons, infectious disease and infection prevention specialists, administrators, operating room and inpatient nursing staff, central sterile processing, anesthesia, environmental services, and engineering.

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Project Zero's goal is to eliminate surgical site infections. To that end, the St. Luke's team established a peri-operative clinic, standardized surgical protocols, and took steps to manage environmental factors. The Joint Replacement Program focuses on increased participant satisfaction, comfort and pain control, and decreased post-operative infections.

The program standardized post-operative order sets for joint replacements and established a pre-operative joint class to better prepare participants for surgery. Working together, the two teams achieved a 50% reduction in joint infections by the end of the first full year (2012) and have continued to maintain those rates through 2014. Both teams continue to work to improve outcomes and the peri-operative experience for Joint Program participants. Project Zero has been rolled out to all surgical lines and has become a formal system-wide priority; the goal continues to be to reach the goal of zero SSIs. The St. Luke's team who worked on and submitted the information was *Jerrie Hammons, RN, Infection Prevention Practitioner; Rebecca Humphreys, RN, Director of the Orthopedic Service Line; Mindy Jennings, MHA, Continuous Improvement Consultant, and Betty Lipple, RN, Joint Replacement Coordinator*

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*About Qualis Health:*

*Qualis Health is one of the nation's leading population health management organizations, and a leader in improving care delivery and patient outcomes, working with clients throughout the public and private sector to advance the quality, efficiency and value of healthcare for millions of Americans every day.*