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Ritzville Health Care Providers Make a Difference to Injured Workers

Spokane, WA – Ritzville Medical Clinic and East Adams Rural Hospital have joined the nearly 1,100 healthcare providers, 29 hospitals, and 578 employers who participate in the Eastern Washington Center of Occupational Health & Education (COHE) project. Through COHE, injured workers are returning to work quicker with less negative impact to their lives and their employers, while saving substantial amounts in medical claims.

A program of St. Luke's Rehabilitation Institute in collaboration with the Washington State Labor & Industries, the COHE program supports everyone involved in the worker injury by acting as a liaison to ensure prompt treatment and an effective claims process. "COHE performs an excellent service for employers and employees in our region by facilitating improved quality of care for injured workers, encouraging return to work programs, and helping reduce the cost of worker's compensation insurance," said John Silano, COHE Business/Labor Advisory Board Chairperson.

A study published in the December 2011 issue of the American Public Health Association journal, *Medical Care* found that injured workers treated by health-care providers operating under COHE best practices had 19.7 percent fewer disability days than other injured workers receiving treatment, and a reduction in total disability and medical costs of \$510 per claim.

"Work-related disability is a major public health problem that's largely overlooked in the U.S.," Dr. Gary Franklin, medical director for the Department of Labor & Industries said. "This study shows that using occupational health best practices when treating injured workers can have an important effect on their recovery."

"Through this collaboration, we have reduced disability and returned injured workers to the job with less disability. COHE has been proven to work and we are reaching out to injured workers with a simple message. If you're injured, go to a participating COHE provider for your treatment," said COHE Health Services Coordinator Pam Cromer.

What began as a pilot project by the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries COHE was made a permanent statewide program in March, 2011. The Eastern Washington COHE, one of two locations in the pilot program, serves 16 counties and works with providers on more than 1,400 claims per month. "I would like to extend my gratitude to all in the Ritzville community and those providers regionally who have worked hard to improve care to injured workers," said Dan Hansen, program director for Eastern Washington COHE.

For more information or a list of Eastern Washington COHE providers, visit www.goCOHE.com or call 1-866-247-COHE. For more information about the COHE programs state wide, visit www.lni.wa.gov and search for COHE.

****Interview opportunities available with local COHE providers and employees*

COHE is a program of St. Luke's Rehabilitation Institute, a service of Inland Northwest Health Services (INHS) an independent, non-profit corporation in Spokane, Washington providing collaboration in health care services on behalf of the community and its member organizations Providence Health Care and Empire Health Foundation.

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When looking for a participating COHE Provider or Facility, providers in your area will display this sign:

