

New general surgeon at St. Luke

Saying that “surgery offers a perfect blend of science and art,” new St. Luke general surgeon Dr. Michael O’Connor arrives in Ronan to start practicing his “art” this month.

O’Connor brings 18 years surgical experience to the Mission Valley from his position as surgeon at Evanston Regional Hospital in Evanston, WY, where he served as chief of staff from 2008-2010.



The certified trauma surgeon began his healthcare career as a surgical technician in Rollins, WY. He says he entered the surgical tech program to see if surgery was the right career choice. “It let me see if I liked the OR. I loved it, so I just kept going.”

O'Connor says the hands-on experience in the OR also gave him a very real-world sense of his job-to-be adding, "You don't start a career in the army as a general – you have to be in the trenches first."

In addition to being a certified trauma surgeon, O'Connor has a wide range of experience, including laparoscopic procedures, breast surgery and thyroid and parathyroid surgery. Particular areas of interest include anti-reflux surgery for treatment of heartburn and all forms of laparoscopy.

As a general surgeon, "you get to do a little bit of everything," he says. Unlike specialists, who often need a larger population to ply their trade, general surgery "gives you the luxury of being able to practice in a small town, do well and be useful."

O'Connor says that when he visited St. Luke Hospital early this summer, "I was just amazed at the quality of the equipment and the beautiful building." He adds, "The technology is great, but the people are what's really wonderful."

The surgeon, who expects to be on the job at St. Luke in early September, will be moving to the Mission Valley in late August with his wife, Jennifer, and their four children ages 10 to 17. Jennifer is a registered nurse, who specializes in newborn and post-partum care.

Dr. O'Connor replaces Dr. Larry Scott, who resigned in June to accept a position in Ohio, where he will serve as a lead surgeon at an institution that's developing a breast cancer center. Dr. Scott had been with St. Luke since November 2007.

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