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St. Luke's, consulate team up to provide health information

By Anne Wallace Allen
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Idaho's Mexican consulate is teaming up with St. Luke's Health System to provide health information for visitors to the consulate's office in Boise.

The new service, called a health window, is aimed at steering visitors to places where they can receive health testing or other care.

"Prevention in terms of health is by

far better than dealing with the problem," said Consul Ricardo Pineda on Oct. 11.

Mexican President Felipe Calderón has stepped up his country's efforts to improve the standard of living of all Mexicans living abroad.

He plans to establish a "Ventanilla de Salud," or Health Window, in all 50 Mexican consulates in the United States by the end of the year, Pineda said.

The Idaho consulate, which serves Idaho and Montana, is the 42nd, Pineda said.

According to the last Census, 140,000 to 145,000 Mexicans live in Idaho — about 10 percent of the state's population.

The health window is open to people of all nationalities, not just to Mexicans, Pineda said.

St. Luke's is paying the salary of a full-time bilingual worker for the

Health Window. No medical treatment will be provided there.

"It ties in with our mission to improve the health of people in our region," St. Luke's spokesman Ken Dey said.

Mexico's health secretary, Jose Angel Cordova Villalobos, is scheduled to appear at the consulate at the Washington Group Plaza on Parkcenter Boulevard at 4 p.m. Nov. 11 for the opening of the health window.