



Representatives from the TELUS Niagara Ride for Dad presented the One Foundation with \$32,504 on Thursday to be used toward the Niagara Health System's SABR prostate cancer research trial. From left, are Joe Zoccoli of Tim Hortons, ride co-chair Jeff Latham, Dr. Theo Tsakaridis, Kristina Mauzi of the One Foundation, and ride treasurer Damian Parrent,

Niagara ready to make the Ride for Dad, again

Melinda Cheevers

mcheevers@niagarathisweek.com

ST. CATHARINES — For some, it's a fundraising motorcycle poker run that let's them spend a day on their bike exploring Niagara, for others it's more personal.

The Telus Motorcycle Ride for Dad returns to Niagara June 18, giving riders the opportunity to raise research funds and awareness of prostate cancer. Event co-chair Jeff Latham of the Niagara Regional Police Service, knows just how important that latter part is. His father is a prostate cancer survivor.

"Early detection is so important," he said.

Damian Parrent, ride treasurer and one of the founding organizers of the Niagara ride, said many participants have similar stories as prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed men's cancer. His father-in-law had it and survived with treatment.

"One in seven Canadian men will be diagnosed with this disease and 12 men will die from it today," he said.

NRP deputy chief Joe Matthews said being a survivor of both testicular and colon cancer taught him the importance of regular check ups.

"After you've been through colon and testicular cancer, there's no embarrassment anymore. You get checked, regularly," he said.

Organizers hosted a kick-off barbecue on Thursday in the courtyard outside the St. Catharines Public Library and presented \$32,504 to the Walker Family Cancer Centre in support of

the SABR Prostate Trial, a clinical trial entering Phase III with the help of funds raised through Ride for Dad riders, supporters, prostate cancer patients and their patients in the Niagara region.

The clinical trial reduces the number of treatments from 39 radiotherapy sessions to five and is part of an international study now rolling out across Canada to 14 cancer centres, including the Walker Family Cancer Centre.

Dr. Theo Tsakaridis, a radiation oncologist at the cancer centre and the local principal investigator on the SABR Prostate Trial, was on hand to accept the cheque, which came from funds raised through rides held in Niagara over the past few years. Tsakaridis will act as the 2016 honorary ride captain for the event. Latham said every year there are about 200 bikers who head out for the 200-kilometre poker run ride that weaves its way across Niagara. The ride starts at the Royal Canadian Legion in Niagara-on-the-Lake, hitting five poker stops throughout the region before ending at Club Italia in Niagara Falls. Following the ride, which takes about four hours in total, there will be a pasta dinner served at Club Italia where the final speeches will take place, along with the awarding of prizes.

Latham said they've raised about \$40,000 each year with the ride. In the beginning, the money went towards awareness but this year's donation marked the first time it went directly to research.

On June 18, registration runs from 7-8:45 a.m. and the ride starts at 9 a.m.

For more information, visit RideForDad.ca.