

# Bike tour sets its sights on raising awareness about pancreatic cancer

By **LAURA JEAN GRANT**

CAPE BRETON POST

**SYDNEY** — After watching her mother die from the disease, Cheryl LeBlanc-Weldon has a very personal reason for being involved in efforts to raise awareness about pancreatic cancer.

“It happened so fast,” she remembers. “She was just not feeling well, she had some tests done and they said ‘Well you have cancer, you need surgery,’ and this all happened within a couple of months and she was gone. She was only 54.”

LeBlanc-Weldon, who grew up in Cape Breton but now calls Halifax home, said her mother, Decie LeBlanc, a resident of Sydney, died in 1999 after a brief battle with pancreatic cancer, which has the highest fatality rate of any type of cancer.

“I didn’t know anything about pancreatic cancer when she got diagnosed and there was very little information,” she said.

So, when a colleague started Craig’s Cause Pancreatic Cancer Society — in memory of her father who also died from the disease — to promote awareness and raise funds for research, LeBlanc-Weldon decided to start a Cape Breton chapter of the society, named in honour of her mother. As a chapter, fundraising and awareness events have been held on the island to help Cape Bretoners dealing with pancreatic cancer, and their families.

And now a Maritime-wide Craig’s Cause bike tour is headed this way.

“The marathon bike tour is another part of trying to create awareness of the disease, the signs, the symptoms, the causes and possible avenues for treatment. We have about 20 cyclists who will leave Halifax and they are travelling all through the Maritimes on their bicycles in a relay style,” explained LeBlanc-Weldon.

The tour will arrive in Cape Breton July 31 and will make a stop at the Cape Breton Regional Hospital that day from 4-6 p.m. for an awareness and information session. Dr. Mark Walsh from the Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre, a pancreatic patient and

caregiver and a representative of the Craig’s Cause Pancreatic Cancer Society, will be among the speakers at the event.

“We’re trying to get the message out and hopefully just educate people and make them more aware of that cancer and things that are happening to help,” said

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More than anything, she’s hoping that Craig’s Cause gives people a place to turn when they are diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

“When my mom had that diagnosis there wasn’t anything. The only thing that I could find were websites in the United States. There wasn’t really anything in Canada, but now because of Craig’s cause, there is,” she said.

For more information, visit [www.craigsc ause.ca](http://www.craigsc ause.ca).

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