

William Tan to cycle for charity despite illness

Cancer-stricken Dr William Tan is undergoing chemotherapy, but that is not stopping him from doing his part for charity.

After having experienced first-hand the cost of treatment, the 52-year-old wants to honour his word to support a fund-raising event called Ride for Hope 2009.

Organised by students from the National University of Singapore's Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, the event on Aug 29 will see 40 of them cycling alongside the wheelchair-bound Dr Tan in a bid to raise \$100,000 for needy patients.

The 80km ride will see them making half-hour pit stops at six hospitals islandwide.

"But I will cover only a short distance of 2km to 5km on my doctor's advice," said Dr Tan, a medical doctor and neuroscientist who is suffering from cancer of the blood.

He wore two masks, to protect his weakened immune system due to chemotherapy, at a press conference yesterday to publicise the event.

"I want to be a compliant patient," said Dr Tan, who has taken part in wheelchair marathons in the Arctic and Antarctic.

After he was diagnosed with cancer in April, he said he struggled at first to accept that fact. But the hope of doing more with his life spurred him on.

His treatment costs also enlightened him on the limitations of Medisave, making it "all the more

necessary to continue" with the Ride for Hope 2009 project.

People may not have enough in their Medisave account to pay for treatment of chronic illnesses, which is why the buying of health insurance is recommended.

For now, Dr Tan is not planning any new fund-raising projects. One to help an orphanage in Shanghai and another to help HIV-positive children in Kenya have been "postponed indefinitely".

But Cycle of Hope – to help The Straits Times School Pocket Money Fund, which targets needy children – will proceed as planned next month.

He is unsure if he can participate, saying that "as a cancer patient, you live one day at a time".

The event has so far raised more than \$30,000, he added.

HOW TO MAKE A DONATION

■ How to donate to Ride for Hope 2009:

Indicate "Ride for Hope" on the back of a cheque made payable to Medical Society, National University of Singapore. Mail it to:

NUS Medical Society
c/o The Dean's Office
Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine
National University of Singapore
10 Medical Drive

Singapore 117597

■ Free health screening

Look out for a free health screening at Ang Mo Kio Hub basement one. Organised by the NUS' Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, the service on Aug 28 to 29 aims to screen 3,000 people for blood pressure as well as cholesterol and blood glucose levels. Colon cancer screening kits will also be given away.