

Being Proactive with Prostate Cancer Pays Off

It's been almost three years since James Schneiderwent was diagnosed with prostate cancer and about eight years since he became an avid cyclist.

What does the first fact have to do with the second? Both are reasons Schneiderwent has participated in the Pedal Away Prostate Cancer Bike Race and Health Fair that's held in Dover each September. The annual event focuses on increasing prostate cancer awareness and raises funds that support free community prostate screening programs and educational outreach.

"A lot of people think prostate cancer affects older people, but I was 49 years old when I got it," said Schneiderwent, who became a patient of Urologist [Michael Zaragoza, MD](#), because of a family history of prostate cancer. "My father was 59, or 10 years older than me, when he was diagnosed. And I knew that his cancer put me at high risk for it. So, I started seeing Dr. Zaragoza when I was 40 for a yearly checkup. And it's a good thing I did."

When Schneiderwent's prostate-specific antigen (PSA) levels jumped slightly one year to the next, Dr. Zaragoza recommended that he have a repeat PSA test six months later. PSA is a protein that's made by cells in the prostate gland and its levels can be measured with a blood test. The higher the PSA levels the greater the chance of prostate cancer.

When the results of the second test showed the same levels as the first, Dr. Zaragoza told Schneiderwent he wanted to do a biopsy because of his family history. "Even though I was hesitant, I decided to go through with it and they found the cancer," explained Schneiderwent.

Schneiderwent was diagnosed with prostate cancer in the fall, and after weighing his treatment options, decided to have his prostate removed via [robotic surgery](#) at Bayhealth Hospital, Kent Campus the following spring.

"Because my father had his prostate removed and based on what I had researched on my own, along with Dr. Zaragoza's recommendations, I knew that was the best way of ensuring you'd get all of the cancer," shared Schneiderwent.

Even though Schneiderwent and his father both had their prostates removed surgically, Schneiderwent says they had very different experiences — Schneiderwent had a much faster recovery thanks to the technological advances of the surgical robot. "My surgery was on a Monday and by Saturday I was out of the house," he recalled. "My dad was

also in the hospital for a week, and I was only in overnight. And I remember the nurse in the post-op area being amazing. She sat with me until my room was ready to make sure I was okay.”

Schneiderwent said he now has appointments with Dr. Zaragoza every six months. And Dr. Zaragoza reports that Schneiderwent is doing well from a clinical perspective.

As for his cycling, Schneiderwent said he gets out about three times per week when the weather is nice, and his normal route is a 25-mile loop. “I am now cancer-free and am living a healthy life due to early detection and having a great doctor.”

Visit [Bayhealth.org/Prostate-Cancer](https://www.bayhealth.org/Prostate-Cancer) for more about prostate cancer risk factors and screening recommendations.