

Linda Ivany, regional manager for dialysis for Eastern Health, was very pleased with the turnout for the first annual Dialysis Dash. She said the goal is to raise the money needed to purchase a total of 55 chairs for facilities in St. John's, Carbonear, Burin, Clarenville and Bonavista, which take care of about 350 dialysis patients.

“There’s always a real challenge to get a comfortable chair. Our chairs are really old — they’re probably eight or nine years old so the health foundation had agreed to help us fundraise to buy new chairs,” she said.

The new chairs — a few have been purchased already — can be customized with a remote to help patients get comfortable during their long dialysis treatments.

“Our older chairs, the nurses would have to come over and adjust the chair for the patient. So these are really good from an occupational health view for our staff, but also gives the patient the autonomy to be able to adjust the chair however they’d like,” Ivany said.

Conception Bay South resident Vincent Andrews, who has been receiving dialysis treatment for a little more than two years, has had a test run in the new chairs, and said being able to move independently is a game changer.

“Each time you get uncomfortable you can change your body position, so that’s huge for us. It changes the whole experience for us,” he said.

Andrews participated in the event's 5K race, and raised more money than any other participant. He said he figures being the poster boy for the event — he was featured in a promotional video for it — gave him a leg up in fundraising, and he appreciates the hard work the other participants put in. The turnout was a little overwhelming for him.

“I’m not easily overwhelmed but,” he said, pausing. “Yeah, it meant a lot.”

Each chair costs upwards of \$6,000, which means Saturday's event will cover the cost of at least four.

"As of right now, our initial tallies are showing over \$26,000, but we have more donations coming in and a lot of people saying they've got more to bring in Monday," said Jackie O'Brien, communications and stewardship manager for the Health Care Foundation.

For more, see Monday's Telegram.

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