



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Survivors of Serious Diseases Race in PPD-sponsored IRONMAN® Triathlon

#### *PPD Heroes inspire hope, personify the promise of clinical research*

**WILMINGTON, N.C.** (Sept. 26, 2016) – Pharmaceutical Product Development, LLC ([PPD](#)) today announced the 2016 team of [PPD Heroes](#), who share inspiring, personal stories of life-changing clinical research and will compete in the 2016 PPD® IRONMAN® North Carolina triathlon presented by New Hanover Regional Medical Center on Oct. 22.

PPD Heroes, who have overcome life-threatening illnesses with medical treatments developed in clinical research, help increase understanding of the importance of [participation in clinical trials](#), a critical component of developing new medicines. PPD Heroes will share their motivating stories at the PPD Hero Awards, an invitation-only celebration at the company's worldwide headquarters in Wilmington on Oct. 21.

The next day, they will compete alongside nearly 3,000 athletes from around the United States and the world in the inaugural PPD® IRONMAN® North Carolina triathlon presented by New Hanover Regional Medical Center or the PPD® IRONMAN® 70.3® North Carolina triathlon presented by New Hanover Regional Medical Center.

“We applaud the PPD Heroes for their perseverance and courage in overcoming serious illness and participating in this challenging triathlon, demonstrating, as the IRONMAN team says, that anything is possible,” said David Simmons, PPD’s chairman and CEO. “At PPD, we’re inspired by the PPD Heroes to achieve new heights in the conduct of clinical research to help our clients deliver medical breakthroughs that improve health for all the heroes in our lives.”

Introducing the 2016 PPD Heroes team:

- [Kirk Smith](#), owner of a graphic design and web firm in Athens, Georgia, experienced chest pains one day in 2013. He was diagnosed with stage IIIb lung cancer with an ALK+ mutation, which is one of the rarest genetic mutations for lung cancer nonsmokers and has a five-year survival rate of five percent. He credits clinical research for saving lives and for his being alive nearly three years after his lung cancer diagnosis.
- [Emily Schaller](#), the Michigan-based cystic fibrosis (CF) patient and founder of the Rock CF Foundation, has participated in multiple clinical trials. In 1983, at 18 months old, she was diagnosed with CF at a time when the median age of survival was in the late teens. She began participating in clinical trials in her early teens and has volunteered for trials of breakthrough CF therapies, including one that has

transformed her life.

- [Robert Moore](#), an agricultural engineer with the U.S.D.A. and lives in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, had optic neuritis and lost vision in his left eye at age 17. His vision returned, but four years later he experienced numbness on the right side of his face. He was referred to a neurologist who diagnosed multiple sclerosis (MS). Robert does not feel MS defines him and he maintains an active lifestyle, especially with the support of new therapies approved since his diagnosis eight years ago.
- [Willie Vasser, Jr.](#), of Virginia Beach, Virginia, who was a healthy triathlete surprised to be diagnosed with leukemia in May 2004. Vasser, his wife Ellen, who is a pediatric oncology nurse, and his doctor began researching treatment options. “We discovered a clinical trial that showed promise,” Vasser said. “I started the clinical trial chemotherapy in February 2005 and by September was in complete remission. Sadly, my son Brian was soon diagnosed with a more aggressive form of leukemia and died in November 2006. In his honor, I continue to do races and encourage others to consider a clinical trial when seeking treatment options.”
- [Mollie Darby](#), an interior designer in the Washington, D.C. area, and a founder of JUST TRYAN IT, a nonprofit group supporting families dealing with pediatric cancer, and her son **Ryan Darby**. Ryan, 13, was diagnosed with leukemia at age six. “Our lives were changed forever by Ryan’s diagnosis, but cancer picked the wrong kid, or the right kid,” Mollie said. “Ryan is not going to quit advocating until cancer is cured. He doesn’t think any other child should have to go through what he went through.”

The 2016 PPD IRONMAN North Carolina triathlon presented by New Hanover Regional Medical Center starts in Wrightsville Beach, winds through surrounding counties and ends in downtown Wilmington near PPD’s headquarters. The race features a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bike course and a 26.2-mile run. The 2016 PPD IRONMAN 70.3 North Carolina triathlon presented by New Hanover Regional Medical Center features a 1.2-mile swim, a 56-mile bike course and a 13.1-mile run.

The lineup of race week events also includes the inaugural New Hanover Regional Medical Center IRONKIDS North Carolina Fun Run presented by UnitedHealthcare. The race starts at 5 p.m. on Oct. 21, the day before the triathlon, at the Riverwalk downtown near PPD’s headquarters.

### **About PPD**

PPD is a leading global [contract research organization](#) providing comprehensive, integrated [drug development](#), [laboratory](#) and lifecycle management services. Our clients and partners include [pharmaceutical](#), [biotechnology](#), [medical device](#), academic and [government](#) organizations. With offices in 46 countries and more than 17,000 professionals worldwide, PPD applies innovative technologies, therapeutic expertise and a firm commitment to quality to help clients and partners bend the cost and time curve of drug development to deliver life-changing therapies that improve health. For more information, visit [www.ppd.com](http://www.ppd.com).

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