



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

February 4, 2025

2024-2025 Board Members

President Kim Brattain
Pres Elect Patrick Baker
Past Pres Edwin Peacock
Secretary Bill Gill
Treasurer Craig Field
Sergeant at Arms
Mike Wollinger
Exec Sec Christine Cipriano

Directors 2023-2025

Linwood Bolles
Terri DeBoo
Andy Dinkin
Donna Dunlap
Joel Ford
David Head

Directors 2024-2026

Woodson Bradley
Benton Bragg
John Cantrell
Tish Atkins Charles
Dena Diorio
Stuart Hair
Jesse Hite
Virginia Owen

Membership John Cantrell

Foundation Joe Morris

Programs Luther Moore



Justin Favaro, MD, PhD, Oncology Specialists of Charlotte

by **Bill Barte**

World Cancer Day came with a strong message from the podium of Charlotte Rotary. A heartfelt introduction by Jeff Atkinson included his own cancer story and his relationship with our speaker, Dr. Justin Favaro. Atkinson recounted his cancer diagnosis, meeting Favaro, and twelve months later he was cancer-free. He attributed it to “the good Lord, good medicine, and a good doctor.”

Justin Favaro, MD, PhD, from Oncology Specialists of Charlotte, has had a distinguished career in Oncology and has been recognized as a Charlotte Top Doctor for his contributions to cancer care. His expertise includes healthcare policy, clinical trials, and patient care.

He began his presentation by sharing that although the death rate from cancer has dropped 34% since 1991, there were still areas of increase. Female incidences of cancer in women under 50 years of age have been greater than that of their male counterparts. More specifically, uterine cancer in females (ages 30-39) has risen. Research continues in the reasons, but one underlying component is that women stopped smoking later than men.

Treatment for cancer was modernized in the 1940s with the advance of drugs derived from mustard agents. Many of those are still used today, explained Favaro. He included natural treatments over the years that include the periwinkle plant and table salt that promote anti-cancer activity by preventing T cell exhaustion.

As the presentation continued, the audience of Charlotte Rotary began learning the specificity of the cancer fight. Although about ten percent of cancers can be predisposed through inheritance (breast, ovarian for women, prostate, pancreatic for men). Starting in the 21st century, cancer cells were able to be targeted, and their growth stopped by blocking the proteins that allow cancerous growth.

Different individuals bring different demands to the treatment of cancer. Favaro explained the types of therapy engaged in treatment:

- Immunotherapy which utilizes a patient's own immune system to fight cancer
- BiTe Therapy consists of a synthetic protein molecule that interacts and kills the cancer cells without harming healthy cells
- CarT Cell Therapy is similar to bone marrow transplants where T cells are removed, engineered in lab, then infused back into the patient
- Avestin (Via IV) and Inlyta (via oral) reduce blood flow in a cancerous region to shrink the growth of cancer.
- Combination of immunotherapy and anti-angiogenesis inhibitors to kill cancer is not currently FDA-approved but is having some success in tests

Through all the different cancer treatments, whether direct engagement or more complicated, the one concern is always the different side effects that people may have, he noted. These side effects are managed by using steroids.

Another tool that is being utilized in the modern cancer fight and in healthcare overall is Artificial Intelligence (AI). It helps digest massive amounts of information into a more usable form and in the development of drugs to fight cancer.

The business of healthcare, insurance, and politics are all a part of the healthcare conversation in cancer treatment, stated Dr. Favaro.

However, there are also considerations that we can take into effect as individuals. He included a list of items that help minimize cancer in our lives. Avoiding processed foods, exercising, avoiding alcohol, prescreening, and early diagnosis all help in the fight against cancer.

On World Cancer Day, there was a feeling from attendees of the Charlotte Rotary, of being better educated about the fight against cancer; and confidence in one of the leading soldiers, Dr. Justin Favaro.

A recording of the meeting can be found here:

With Slides: <https://vimeo.com/1053530829>

Without Slides: <https://vimeo.com/1053536285>

The presenter's introduction begins at approximately 30 minutes and 15 seconds.