21 11 30 – Meeting Notes

The LaFayette Rotary Club met on November 30, 2021. Members of the Birmingham Rotary Club met with us to discuss an initiative they are interested in offering to Chambers County. Members of the Birmingham Club were Dr. Isabel Scarini (also an OB-GYN University of Alabama at Birmingham Hospital) and Dan Stephens (Executive Director of the Birmingham Club), along with Sarah Bowler (also representing TogetHER for Health). The state of Alabama has the highest rate of cervical cancer in the United States and within Alabama, Chambers County has the highest rate. For those reasons the Birmingham Club in partnership with UAB, TogetHER for Health and the Alabama Department of Public Health is offering Chambers County the opportunity to be a part of this initiative. The Birmingham Club began this initiative in Sri Lanka where they vaccinated young girls between the ages of 10-12.

The main cause of cervical cancer is the human papilloma virus (HPV) that most people are able to clear from their bodies. Cervical cancer is one of two types of cancer (colorectal is the other type) that can actually be prevented, not just treated. HPV vaccination and HPV testing can actually prevent a person from having the cancer. Vaccination is recommended before age 15. The initiative has four potential preliminary strategies:

• prevention (education and options for vaccination)

• screening

• follow-up

• treatment

The goal of the initiative is to eradicate cervical cancer, similar to what Rotary is doing with polio world-wide. The hope and plan is to expand this initiative to more counties in Alabama.

Also present at the meeting were representatives from Auburn University who are in the process of opening the Chambers County Community Health and Wellness Center who expressed a desire to partner with this initiative.

The LaFayette Rotary Club will discuss in the coming weeks if and how they want to support this initiative.

Diane Sherriff