

Bulletin

JAN/APR 2021

MEMBER MAGAZINE FOR THE POLK COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

Covid-19 PANDEMIC TO ENDEMIC
KATHIE J. LYMAN SCHOLARSHIPS

Medical Students' VIRTUAL MISSION TRIP

Memorial: Albert J. Mintzer, M.D.

The Empathy Effect





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2021

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Bulletin

JAN/APR 2021
MEMBER MAGAZINE FOR THE POLK COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

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HARBINGER *of a* CHANGE IN SEASONS

By: William Wortman, M.D.

Dear Members of PCMS,

Greetings and happy Spring to you all. This issue of the PCMS bulletin brings news on multiple fronts regarding advocacy at the state level, a new real estate opportunity for the Polk County Medical Society (PCMS) and a public service announcement regarding the ongoing pandemic.

I am delighted to inform you that PCMS has again secured funding for the Volunteer Physician Network Program to offset the cost of the program and coordination of access to free specialty care to lowans who meet eligibility requirements of being below 200% of federal poverty guidelines and ineligible for any other federal or state programs. This funding ensures the Volunteer Physician Network Program, which

has grown exponentially during the course of the pandemic, can continue its mission to serve and care for lowans in need.

PCMS advocacy efforts at the state house have helped to shape, House Bill 592, regarding tort reform, placing a \$1M hard cap on non-economic damages. The bill is currently on the 'Unfinished Business Calendar' and remains alive for the remainder of the current session. PCMS is also in high support of legislature regarding continued re-imbursement for a broad range of telehealth services going forward.

The PCMS Board is actively exploring an attractive and promising relocation option which will yield a freshly updated property while remaining in a central location for

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ease of accessibility for member business. The possible relocation may also provide a lower long-term building overhead as well as the potential for a lower property tax burden in the long run. The Board has considered this potential move as part of an urban enhancement and economic development opportunity for the Sherman Hill neighborhood and greater Des Moines area.

Regarding the global pandemic, I wanted to express concern about many states relaxing mask and distancing mandates. While cases remain relatively low in Central Iowa, so too are vaccination rates at this time.

Sources are estimating about 16 - 19% of Iowans are currently 'fully vaccinated'.

In the European Union, specifically France, Italy and Germany, an

unfortunate rise in positive variant cases has resulted in another surge or 4th wave. One may surmise that this may well be a harbinger of a wave or surge to come to the United States and eventually Iowa (as such a trend was observed in Nov-Dec 2020). I would, therefore, continue to recommend that we advise our patient and population in Iowa, to remain steadfast in their mask-wearing and physical distancing efforts and to continue with the CDC guidance on precautions and hygiene.

The Executive Council and Administrative Staff thank you for all of your efforts and membership during these persistently challenging times.

William E. Wortman, M.D.



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REUNITED *and* Reconnecting

By: Paula A. Noonan, C.E.O.

As we phase in the year at Polk County Medical Society, we do so with in trepidation and the optimism of things to come. We look to gaining a sense of normalcy, but with reservation, carefully watching our footsteps, so as not to fall back into the quagmire of another Covid-19 surge.

As health professionals, everyone has given their all. A sense of pride and hope for the future is what we feel when we look upon our members, as we have throughout the many challenges of recent times.

We move forward with a pandemic turning endemic, in which our members have emerged as selfless,

brave and truly altruistic heroes of a nation, who relied on their scientific expertise, knowledge and ultimate sacrifice in caring, to see us all through this dark chapter.

You, our physicians, heeded the call of a nation, both local and national, to provide nothing short of miraculous service to humanity. Thank you does not seem enough to say, but is all we can give to you, outside of staying diligent with precautionary measures (social distancing, hand washing, mask wearing) to help ensure all that hard work does not go to the wayside.

The pandemic did reinforce some of the good in human nature. As we move forward, we experience more

collaboration and cooperation, open channels of communication between agencies, entities and local communities. We have been tried and tested, in the face of major issues of race, equality and civility. There remains hope and initiative to better the world we live in amongst ever-present threats.

Just as 'Spring has sprung', we are walking towards the light. We have the potential to become greater than ourselves. Selfless, altruistic beings of empathy that all turn to the dawn of a new horizon that may hold challenges for us, but that we face together from lessons learned throughout the past year.

2021 holds a year of promise for our future, the possibility to regain our connections with others, face to face connections, which are the essence of our existence. The human touch, which is at the core and center of what the medical community practices, and they have recognized all along. We need to care for each other, support each other and find ways to help each other.

We are at our best when we work together, with each other, for each other and beyond the self, after a year of isolation, loss and stress.

So, as we move forward as a membership in our medical society, we look for ways to instill those connections, and regain and build new relationships as a medical community. We have gatherings on the horizon, with safety measures still being recognized, in which we crawl, walk and run towards reconnecting our medical community.

Our first event of this year is our Blank Park Zoo Wild Lights Festival outing for our physicians, their whole families and friends – celebrating their services to our community. Watch for the information to register for your free PCMS Member tickets on our website. Non-member physicians are invited to join us as well for \$15/per person. We are excited to see all of you again in person and enjoy a stress-free night of beauty, peace, fun and laughter together!



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COVID-19 PANDEMIC TO ENDEMIC:

*What Just Happened, Where Are We
and Where Are We Headed?*

By: Ravi K. Vemuri, M.D.

We entered 2020 hearing about a mysterious illness in the province of Wuhan in China. Information was slow at first but by the end of January Wuhan was under lockdown and China was dealing with a serious outbreak of what we now know as COVID-19 caused by SARS CoV-2. The WHO declared the outbreak a full-fledged pandemic on 3/11/2020.

Amazingly enough China posted the full genome of the single stranded RNA virus on January 15, 2020. By January 17, 2020 researchers had already come up with a target on the SARSCoV-2; the so-called spike protein to formulate a novel mRNA technology-based vaccine.

Our first non-travel related patient ended up in our ICU in Des Moines on 3/13/2021—just five days after our first travel related case was confirmed in Iowa City on 3/8/2021. So just 3.5 months after it was first described in China, COVID-19 was circulating in our midst.

Since then, we have been battling what can best be described metaphorically as a wildfire. It was raging from March 2020 thru the last week of May 2020. We thought we caught up with it and had some degree of control for most of the month of June, but we were uneasy as it was smoldering, and we had to contend with flares that stretched our

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And the Award Goes to . . .



L-R: Hannah Lentfer (DMU), Carl Skoog (U of I) and William Bui Tran (DMU) each received an individual Kathie J. Lyman Scholarship Award of \$1000 by the Polk County Medical Society.

Congratulations to the 2021 Kathie J. Lyman Scholarships Award Recipients! Hannah Lentfer, from Des Moines University (DMU) and Carl Skoog from the University of Iowa (U of I) were awarded the Osteopathic medical student and Allopathic medical student scholarships of \$1000 each. The Podiatric medical student scholarship recipient as William Bui Tran, from Des Moines University who also received a scholarship award of \$1000.

Global Health Mission Program scholarship awards were provided to the Family Medicine Residency Program from Broadlawns Medical Center and The Des Moines University Global Health Student Club. Each received a \$500 Global health award from the Kathie J. Lyman Scholarship Foundation to assist them participants in global medical missions and education programs.

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medical system but never really broke our systems.

From mid-October thru late December, we had a flare of epic proportions—we were near the breaking point in mid-November, but health care workers at all levels fought the pernicious virus heroically.

We have now settled into battling a smoldering fire with periodic small flares. Vaccines are helping but the populace needs to be vigilant and keep practicing simple public health strategies designed to keep our exposed mucus membranes protected until the blaze can be brought under better control. There is a chance that we could still have an epic flare

because we have vaccinated only about 25% of the population to date.

Most epidemiologists feel that at some point the SARS CoV-2 virus will become endemic as we have 7.5 billion people in the world and until at least 75 to 85% of us get vaccinated it will continue to circulate. We will likely need boosters or slightly re-configured vaccines as variants keep popping up. The quicker we can get vaccinated the less chance of variants becoming problematic for us.

We have been living through historic times, we will only truly appreciate all that we have been through when scholars look back at these times 10 to 15 years from now.

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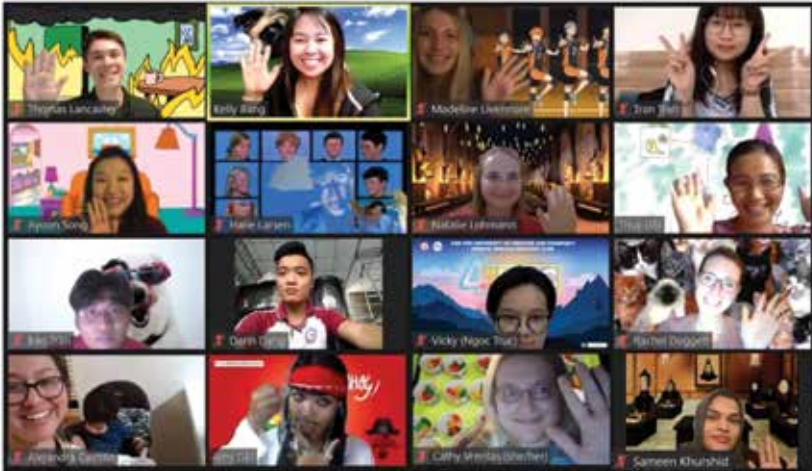
Would you like to write an original article to have published it in the PCMS bi-monthly Bulletin? Topics for articles should be related to the medical field or about one of our members. Please submit articles to the Polk County Medical Society by email at pcms@pcms.org. Listed below are the requirements for publication:

1. Submit original article typed on one side, single-spaced. Length of article preferred one to two pages 8-1/2 x 11" paper or 350 words.
2. Articles should have titles not to exceed five words and may be reconstituted at the discretion of the editor.
3. A recent photo of author and subject is desirable.
4. Byline information should include the highest degree or title, office or pertinent affiliation.
5. Articles may be edited to conform to publication style.
6. All articles written become the permanent property of Polk County Medical Society and may not be published elsewhere without permission from PCMS.
7. Articles not received by issue deadline may be published in further issues.
8. Articles are received with the explicit understanding that they are not simultaneously under consideration by another publication.

DES MOINES UNIVERSITY STUDENT GLOBAL HEALTH CLUB:

A Virtual Mission Trip to Vietnam, Turned Cultural Exchange

By Kelly Bang, DO-24 and Sameen Khurshid, DO-24



Des Moines University Student Global Health Club

Overspring break, sixteen students from Des Moines University (DMU) were immersed in Vietnamese culture – all from the comfort of our own homes. Travel is currently suspended due to Covid-19, which meant that the spring break trips were unable to take place this year.

Continuing its partnership with Global Engagement Institute, DMU Global Health mitigated these challenges by developing

a 'Virtual Vietnam Spring Break Experience'.

The weeklong opportunity allowed students to learn the history and culture of Vietnam, meet local health care providers, explore global health concepts, and gain knowledge in infection prevention protocols in a cross-cultural setting, all over Zoom. We also collaborated on projects with Vietnamese medical students from

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The Polk County Medical Society continually strives toward its mission of improving the general health of the community by collaborating with many local health-care related organizations.

These organizations include, but are not Limited to:

- The Volunteer Physician Network Program
- Polk County Health Department Lead Poisoning Prevention Coalition
- IHCC Domestic Abuse Guide
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- Polk County Health Department
- Multi-Disciplinary Emergency Planning Group
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- PCHD Jump Start Back-to-School Fair
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- Kathie J Lyman Scholarships for future physicians
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Qualifications for this position include a doctor of osteopathic medicine degree from a COCA-accredited college of osteopathic medicine or a doctor of medicine degree from an LCME-accredited school of allopathic medicine; current board certification in radiology; and a minimum of four years of clinical experience. Three years of teaching experience in undergraduate or graduate medicine are preferred.

Qualified candidates are invited to apply by submitting a CV, cover letter and three references. For a more complete job description, full-time benefit summary or more information on Des Moines University and/or its programs, visit **www.dmu.edu/employment**.

Founded in 1898, Des Moines University offers nine graduate medical/health sciences degrees in its three colleges.

An equal opportunity employer, DMU evaluates qualified applicants without regard to race, color, national origin, ethnicity, creed, religion, age, disability, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information and other characteristics protected by law ("protected class").

Candidates from under-represented groups are encouraged to apply.



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Cần Thơ University of Medicine and Pharmacy, gave presentations addressing both current global and local health issues and created a health promotion tool that can be utilized in the Mekong Delta.

The program also provided creative opportunities, such as trying a Vietnamese dish and learning how to introduce ourselves in Vietnamese. We then shared photos of ourselves completing the tasks. The weeklong virtual experience concluded with a party in true Zoom fashion—using unique backgrounds and playing cultural challenges with new friends.

Though meeting our Vietnamese peers face-to-face would have been immeasurably rewarding, it was a blessing that global health opportunities were not cancelled entirely. Instead, by adapting to the current environmental and social challenges presented by the pandemic, participants were able to enjoy an entirely novel

and exciting experience while collectively appreciating the benefits of a virtual event.

Previously, a virtual opportunity such as this one likely would not have been available. This truly demonstrated the untapped potential and value of virtual experiences, especially as it allowed medical and health sciences students, who live on opposite sides of the globe, to collaborate. Although it was a challenge to accommodate the twelve-hour time difference between Iowa and Vietnam, the virtual event provided a certain degree of flexibility with synchronous and asynchronous activities.

Though virtual events, such as this one, were largely put in place secondary to the pandemic, it is undeniable they provide benefits that make virtual events deserving of consideration even after the travel suspension and gathering restrictions end.



PHYSICIANS: DEBT VS SAVINGS, WHICH COMES FIRST?

ROSS POLKING, CFP®, AIF®, MBA, LEAD Advisor - Business Development

Physicians often ask, "Should I focus more on paying down my debt, or should I just do the minimum and try to save as much as possible?" Everyone's situation is different, and there is no one-size-fits-all answer.

Most every physician at some point deals with debt, not just in the form of student loans, but a mortgage, cars, and potentially credit. At the same time, physician or not, most everyone wants to retire someday, which requires savings. So, this gets us back to the original question: debt or savings?

Ultimately, this is not an either/or question but one of striking a balance. Being debt free is great but if you have no slush fund or investments to tap into, that puts you in somewhat of a precarious position. However, letting debt spiral out of control can eventually lead to financial ruin and run all of your savings dry.

Some debt is more critical to eliminate than others. High interest rates and those that do not come with tax benefits should be moved to the front of the line when determining which to pay first. Credit card debt is a primary example.

Let's not forget about savings. First and most important is an emergency reserve. This would amount to cash in an account that can only be accessed in an emergency to prevent further debt accumulation. Define "emergency" too, when setting up the account to hold yourself at bay. Car troubles, furnace failure, or a leaky roof would qualify as emergencies. Ideally, 3-6 months' worth of living expenses would be held in this account.

Once established in your profession, remember that time is your ally, and getting money invested early/often is critical in pursuing financial freedom. Most employers offer a group retirement plan in the form of a 401(k) or 403(b). Most employers also offer a match up to a certain amount of your contribution. Don't leave that free money on the table! Balance your aggressive debt repayments with ideally maximum contributions to your employer's retirement plan. Backdoor Roth contributions and non-qualified brokerage accounts are other savings buckets to consider. Make everything automatic. Relying on your discipline to simply put "extra" money into savings/investing every month is typically not a successful approach.

When aiming for this debt/savings balance, use the 50/30/20 budget to help you allocate your funds. With this method, half your income goes to needs, like housing, groceries, and transportation. 30% goes to wants, like entertainment and eating out. The final 20% goes to debt payments and savings. Depending on your debt load and income, you may want to reduce your wants category and beef up your debt payments and savings.

Spend some time planning and working with your financial advisor to model varying scenarios. Getting an effective strategy implemented early as income accelerates may make a world of financial difference in the future. And remember: **Stay diversified.**

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In Memory of



Albert J. Mintzer, M.D.

A Life member of the Polk County Medical Society, Albert Joseph Mintzer, M.D., passed on January 24th, 2021. A son of European immigrants, he earned a Doctorate in Medicine from the University of Iowa. Dr. Mintzer completed his internship program in Fresno, California, and his OB-GYN residency in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. After serving in the Air Force in Kincheloe, Michigan, as Deputy Hospital Commander, Chief of Professional Services and Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Dr. Mintzer established a private practice in obstetrics and gynecology, here in Des Moines. While in private practice, he served as Chairman of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department at Iowa Lutheran Hospital for over ten years. He retired from his clinical practice at age 73 and served as a clinical instructor at the Gynecology Clinic at Broadlawns Hospital working with medical students until age 85. Dr. Mintzer trained many of the Polk

County Medical Society members and is remembered with great esteem and affection by many.

Dr. Mintzer arranged for the family residency program at Lutheran Hospital to provide care and call services. Always looking to advance his profession through advocacy and innovation, he desegregated the maternity ward while serving in the Air Force and was the first OB-GYN in the Des Moines community to promote natural childbirth, husband coached childbirth and allow fathers into the delivery room, even during Cesarean sections. Of all his achievements, bringing fathers into the birth experience was his most personally gratifying.

An avid reader, Albert enjoyed time with his family and friends, duplicate bridge, golf, and classical music and opera.

****Excerpts reprinted from Iles Funeral obituary.**

THE EMPATHY EFFECT:

4 Ways to Build Trust and Strengthen Relationships with Patients

By: COPIC's Patient Safety and Risk Management Department

The provider-patient relationship is critical to quality care, especially now, in an age of heightened uncertainty. Communicating effectively is one of the most important skillsets any provider can have, and continuously improving your capacity for relationship building will benefit you and your practice for years to come.

Cultivate Empathy Through Effective In-Person Communication

Empathy is the ability to show that you understand or even share the feelings of another person. Showing authentic empathy helps patients feel heard, understood, and supported. Foundational to empathy is the ability to see a situation from the patient's frame of reference. As doctors, for example, we know that infections can occur after surgery, but for a patient, that's not routine at all and can be very scary.

Once you're looking at a situation through your patient's eyes, practice reflective

listening. When you listen reflectively, it means you make eye contact while your patients talk, show genuine interest in what they say, listen without interrupting or interjecting, and summarize what they said to make sure you understand and validate their concerns.

Communicate Effectively via Phone and Digital Channels

When it comes to showing empathy and ensuring that patients understand their health status and recommended treatments, video calls enable you to use eye contact and read patients' facial expressions. But what about when you're limited to telehealth via phone or a text-only chat online?

If you're communicating via chat or phone, you'll probably need to ask more questions in order to assess the situation, determine a course of action, and make sure your patient understands. You can say, "Okay, so this is what we recommend, and these are the risks—Why don't

Polk County Medical Society wants to know what's new! Have you been appointed to a board, received an award, volunteered for a medical mission? Email us at pcms@pcms.org.

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What's new: _____

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you tell us what you understood about that?" Additionally, if you don't have the benefit of using your own facial expressions to communicate empathy and validate patient concerns, you'll need to use empathy statements to show you understand (for instance, "That sounds frustrating—I would be asking the same questions you are.").

Use a Robust Informed Consent Process—Not Just a Form

Informed consent is much more than just a legal imperative, it's a chance to improve communication and help patients get the most out of their medical care. For informed consent to be effective, you need a thorough communication process that accompanies any relevant forms. It is important to distinguish between the process and the paper. The process is where you ensure your patients understand and helps to increase their compliance in their treatment.

When patients understand a recommended treatment and its indications, risks, benefits, alternatives, and the risk of not proceeding, they're more likely to comply with treatment plans

and experience improved outcomes. It is also important to have the informed consent conversation yourself as the treating provider and never delegate it, though other providers can supplement the process and documentation.

After an Adverse Outcome, Focus on the Patient's Needs

Transparency, honesty, and effective communication are all critical to maintaining strong relationships with patients—particularly after an adverse outcome. When results aren't what you or the patient hoped for, empathetic communication and being there for the patient and their family become indispensable.

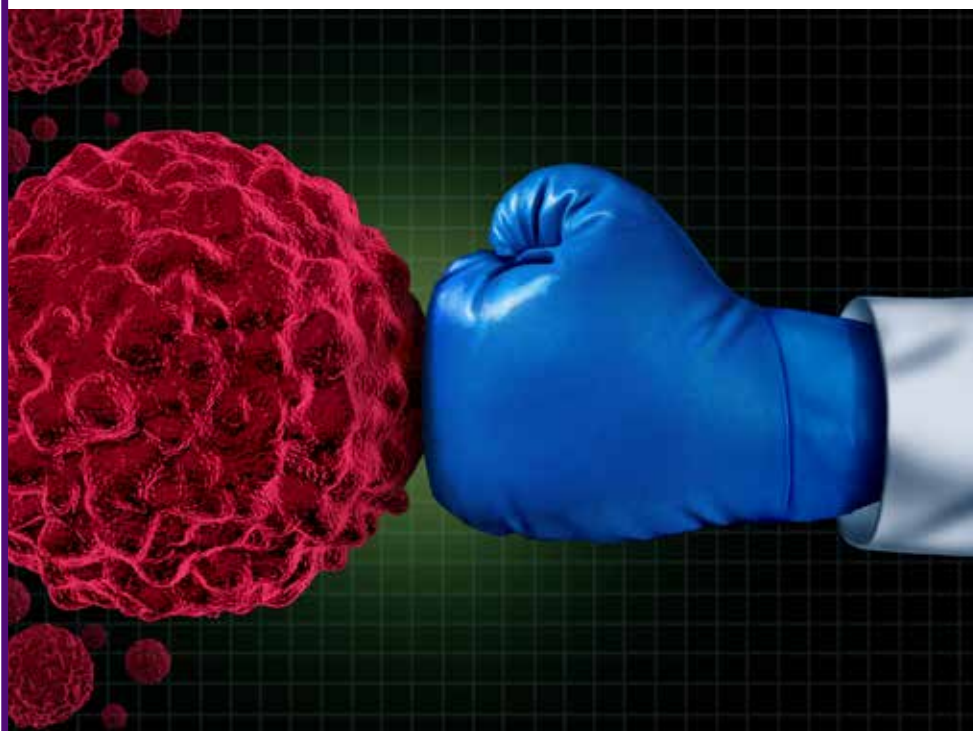
A valuable tool in these situations are communication and resolution programs, which are designed to address the patient's needs, protect the provider-patient relationship, and prevent lengthy legal action in the wake of an unexpected outcome. The goals are to be honest and open about what happened and offer patients and families the chance to ask questions and get answers.

PCMS IS NOW ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER!!



THANK YOU

*to all the Physicians on the
front lines fighting for us!*



Today and Always!

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Invites you to join us and
SAVE THE DATE
for the 8th ANNUAL**

PCMS ZOO BREW

Come & join the fun!!

Wed., June 30th, 2021

5:30-8:30 p.m.

(Adults ONLY)





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