

HEALTH CARE CONSUMER

Fall

Newsletter of the Champaign County Health Care Consumers

1994

CCHCC Welcomes Health Security Express

by Lynn Crandall

"We've gathered here today to welcome friends who've come to share their stories," CCHCC Executive Director Imani Bazzell told the crowd of over 100 people. "We believe that the real solution to our health care crisis is a single-payer system. But we are here today to join with others in demonstrating our support for universal health care coverage."

Bazzell's welcome was directed to riders on the Health Security Express, a nationally coordinated series of bus caravans carrying health care reform supporters. Starting from every corner of the country, each of the caravans converged on the nation's capital, stopping along the way to collect letters and testimony from people with a message for Congress: Health Care Now!

On July 31, a caravan which had started in Texas only a few days before stopped in Champaign, where sympathetic supporters rallied to hear caravan riders share story after story of suffering.

"I'm riding on the bus for my brother," Teresa Perez-Wiseley told

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Service Employees International Union members form ranks around the Health Security Express bus.

Children's Health Committee Proud of Successes

CCHCC's Children's Health Care Committee has had a busy year, working to improve children's access to nutritional programs, and that work has paid off! Several programs that guarantee the improved health and nutrition of hundreds of children throughout Champaign County have been established. **All** school children in Champaign and Ludlow will now have the opportunity to eat breakfast at school. And this summer, children in Rantoul and Champaign were able to get a bite to eat through the Summer Food Service Program at the Rantoul Recreation Center and the

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Consumers, a grassroots
not-for-profit organization
dedicated to ensuring accessible,
affordable health care for all.

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National Health Care Reform:

What Should Consumers be Looking For?

National health care reform legislation continues to move forward, and like everyone else, the Health Care Consumers finds it helpful to remind ourselves of the priorities that originally sparked the debate, in order to be able to better understand the process. The situation may be very different by the time this newsletter is published and mailed, but we will continue to revisit the principles we have used throughout the debate to evaluate whether proposed reforms will make a difference in the lives of consumers.

- 1) **Universal Coverage** -- Everyone should be covered and have access to the same benefits.
- 2) **Comprehensive Benefits** -- Coverage for all medically necessary services.
- 3) **Affordability** -- Limits on out-of-pocket expenses of consumers, elimination of bureaucratic waste, and implementation of progressive financing schemes based on consumers' ability to pay.
- 4) **Freedom of Choice** -- Consumers should be able to choose from among any providers without paying higher costs.
- 5) **Public Accountability** -- Consumers should have access to quality of care information, and serve on decision making boards, so that they can have a say in shaping the system to reflect community needs.
- 6) **Cost Containment** -- Implementation of strong mechanisms (like global budgets) to control skyrocketing costs and eliminate bloated bureaucracies.

It has been clear to the Health Care Consumers from the beginning of the debate that a single-payer style of reform is the only way to truly address the problems inherent in our current health care delivery system. Our elected officials in Washington have not shared this clarity of vision. Before Congress recessed, members were haggling over employer mandates and the definition of universal coverage. Health care reform is now often referred to as health insurance reform, and as time passes, the discussion grows weaker and weaker.

CCHCC continues to struggle with the questions of where to stand at this point in the debate. Should we hold out for real reform? Should we work to make whatever is on the floor as strong as possible, and then take what we can get? When does legislation become so weak that it does more harm than good? You can help to answer these questions by letting us know where you stand on the issues. Remember, CCHCC is a membership organization, and we need to hear from our members to resolve these questions.

CCHCC Briefs:

Opening Doors

Sick and tired of being sick and tired? So are we, and we are organizing to do something about it! *Opening Doors* is a Black women's health project, designed to draw attention to and eliminate barriers to reproductive health education and care. Our current community activities include:

Your Story is Important -- An oral/written history project designed to document our problems in interacting with the health care system, so we can learn from each other, and teach providers to recognize and correct their mistakes.

Focus Groups -- Designed to gather information about Black women's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as garner support and participation in other *Opening Doors* activities.

Questions, comments, ideas, and support can be directed to Jacqui or Jessica.

Canvass Update

The 1994 summer door canvass is coming to an end. A dedicated core of canvassers has succeeded in educating many more local consumers about CCHCC and the issues we work on. The canvass is fast approaching its goal of 500 new or renewed memberships. David Clarkin and Jennifer Pruitt have provided strong leadership as Field Managers, while canvassers Jesse Allen, Dan Lentz, Dan Vukovich, and Pam Wood have proved energetic and committed to working for changes in our health care system.

Universal Committee

This summer has been an historic one for health care reform at the national level. A variety of bills have come and gone, but the overriding principles remain the same (see story on facing page). The committee continues to be dedicated to a

single-payer reform, but has supported the more general goal of universal coverage by hosting the Health Security Express (story on page 1).

Thanks to the many people who have diligently made calls as part of the Campaign for Better Health Care's Phone Action Network. Recent calls to Senators Braun and Simon proved especially effective. Both Illinois Senators held a press conference on August 4, expressing their reservations with Senator Mitchell's health care plan. Their key concerns were that it did not guarantee 100% universal coverage, and may not have a clean single-payer option for individual states. Since these calls have proved so effective, it is important that we continue. We will be revamping our phone tree very soon, so if you would like to become a part of this vital effort, please call CCHCC at 352-6533 and ask for Catherine.

Remember, the monthly committee meetings are the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM. We meet in the CCHCC offices (44 E. Main, Suite 208, Champaign), and welcome all those committed to universal health care.

Advocacy and Referral

We are in the process of integrating our Consumer Health Hotline and Dental Referral programs into a new Advocacy and Referral Program. Look for details in our next newsletter. In the meantime, the lack of meaningful universal health care reform has kept us busy this summer, with over 100 hotline calls. We are grateful for the volunteer advocates who took hotline cases over the summer; it helped to lighten the load. We are looking forward to expanding the number of advocates in the program through our September training. In the upcoming months, with the help of volunteers, the Advocacy and Referral coordinators will be

reorganizing and updating office resources for easy reference.

Bake Sale '94

The Medicare 100/Medicare Plus Seniors Bake Sale was held on Saturday, July 16 at the K-Mart on Philo Road in Urbana. It was a beautiful day, and a lot of beautiful people came by to sample our goodies. CCHCC wants to thank everyone that contributed to the success of this bake sale.

Staff Changes

This summer has seen the addition of five new people to the Health Care Consumers' staff. Jessica Hill joined us as Opening Doors Project Director. She has a Masters in Social Work (with an emphasis on health care) from the U of I, and has worked on health issues in Rwanda and Chicago. We "raided" Parkland College to find our new Community Outreach Organizer for Opening Doors, Jacqui Davis. She was formerly Support Services Coordinator for Adult Basic Education.

We were also honored to welcome three exceptional VISTA volunteers. David Clarkin, a U of I grad who spent the summer as a CCHCC door canvass field manager, is our new Fundraising Organizer. Ponrat Pakpreo, a recent graduate of the University of Wisconsin, joins Catherine Crandall as a Universal Health Care Organizer. Nisha Rathi, a recent graduate from Northwestern, will be working to expand our children's health work as the new Rural Health Organizer.

Laura Kurre, who joined our staff last November as Children's Health Rural Organizer, has moved to the newly created position of Assistant to the Director.

Finally, with fond memories and best wishes, we said goodbye to Jennifer Durst, Children's Health Urban Organizer, who completed her year of VISTA service and returned to Michigan; and Jason Gascoyne who, after five years, left to join his wife in Pennsylvania as she pursues her new teaching career.

We are proud of all of our staff's accomplishments and continuing contributions.

Ewing's Score on Health Issues: Zero

by Thomas O'Rourke

The following are short explanations of several votes taken by the U.S. House of Representatives during the 103rd Congress, First Session, January 1993 through October 1993. Below is a short name, number (HR = House of Representatives), and explanation of the bill, followed by the vote, including Ewing's vote.

For each of the bills, Ewing's 1993 vote was compared to the position of the American Public Health Association (APHA) -- a leading professional organization with a long history of being pro consumer. Overall, Ewing scored 0%; in not one instance did Ewing vote with the position advocated by APHA. In contrast, Rep. Dick Durbin of Springfield scored 82%, Senator Paul Simon 93%, and Senator Carol Mosley-Braun 100%. The votes were as follows:

Family Planning (HR670)

This bill increased funding for family planning activities, and lifted the ban known as the "gag rule," which prohibited counseling on abortion at Family Planning (Title X) Clinics. The bill passed the House 273-149, with Ewing voting no.

Abortion (HR2518)

This amendment prohibited funds from being spent for an abortion, except when it is made known that it is a case of rape, incest, or a necessity to save the life of the mother. This amendment (known as the Hyde amendment) on paying for abortions with federal funds dates from 1977. It prohibits the use of taxpayer's dollars to pay for abortions. Most public health groups oppose this amendment, because it would restrict the availability of abortion services for poor women. This motion passed, with Ewing voting to continue the restrictions on the availability of abortion services for poor women.

Budget Reconciliation (HR2264)

This vote called for the adoption of a conference report to reduce the deficit by an estimated \$496 billion over 5 years, through almost \$241 billion in additional taxes and \$255 billion in spending cuts proposed by President Clinton. Most of the tax increase would be accomplished by raising the top rate on the wealthiest groups. This included: a new top income tax bracket of 36 percent (with a 10 percent surtax) on those with incomes above \$250,000; a tax increase on the social security benefits of wealthier recipients; and a tax increase from 34 percent to 35 percent of corporate income above \$10 million. This proposal also included an increase in spending of \$500 million for childhood immunizations and \$2.5 billion for food stamps. This vote would increase spending for public health programs. The motion passed. Ewing voted no.

Brady Bill (HR1025)

This vote called for the passage of a bill to require a 5 business-day waiting period before an individual could purchase a handgun, in order to allow time for local officials to conduct a background check. The legislation was supported by those in public health, because of its ability to reduce the number of handgun sales to criminals and mentally impaired individuals. The bill passed. Ewing voted no.

Access/Clinics (HR796)

This bill dealt with the issue of freedom of access to abortion clinics. A motion was made to send the bill to a House Committee, with instructions to bring it back with an amendment eliminating the bill's provisions for providing a civil cause of action by individuals and state attorneys general. In essence, this bill focused on protecting the right to access to clinics that provide abortions, but the motion would have weakened the intent of the bill by eliminating a person's ability to take legal action against those

obstructing access to abortion clinics. Those in public health opposed the motion, because of the need to protect access to such clinics. If access to abortion facilities was not protected, patients of abortion services would be intimidated by clinic protests and violence during their attempts to exercise their legal rights to abortion services. The bill to limit this protection was rejected. Ewing was on the losing side of this bill, and voted against protecting access to clinics that provide abortions.

Gay Ban (HR2401)

This was an amendment to strike the provisions codifying a ban on homosexuals in the military, and express the sense of Congress that the issue should be determined by the President and his advisers. The public health community supported the effort to strike the provisions to codify a ban on homosexuals in the military, because of their discriminatory nature and wasteful misuse of federal funds to enforce the ban. The amendment to strike the provision codifying a ban on homosexuals in the military was not passed. Ewing voted to maintain the ban on homosexuals in the military.

Other Tidbits

An interesting bill was HR3 -- Campaign Finance. This bill would have given House candidates up to \$200,000 in federal benefits if they agreed to voluntary spending limits of \$600,000. The sums would be indexed for inflation from 1992 forward, and a separate funding mechanism would have been required. Many groups concerned with meaningful campaign reform supported the legislation, because it provided lower spending limits, public financing provisions, and restricted the amount of political action committee (PAC) contributions to an individual's campaign. Ewing voted against spending limits.

In summary, it is clear that Ewing's votes are anti-consumer, anti-poor, anti-women, and anti-health. Voters should consider the records of all candidates as they go to the polls in the fall. Please write to Rep. Ewing and let him know what you think. Otherwise, it is likely that he will continue his strong record of being anti-consumer.

Children's Health Committee

from page 1

Champaign Park District's Douglass Center.

The Children's Health Committee worked closely with teachers, staff, parents, administrators, and board members of Champaign Unit 4 schools to expand the School Breakfast Program to all Unit 4 schools. After making a presentation to the Board of Education, the Committee worked closely with Unit 4 Business Manager David Grace to create and submit surveys to the school children and develop a promotional campaign for the program. Supported by an overwhelming survey response in favor of the program, Mr. Grace recommended to the school board the expansion of the program to all schools, including the three middle schools and two high schools in the Unit 4 district. The school board then approved the expansion of the breakfast program to all district schools this fall.

Ludlow District #142 implemented a pilot school breakfast program in April, receiving a very strong response. School breakfasts at Ludlow averaged 35 students each morning. This was 57% higher than school officials had originally anticipated. The program is continuing this fall.

In addition to promoting the School Breakfast Program, the Committee also worked with local organizations to establish the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). This program addresses children's nutritional needs when school is out of session. During the spring, the Committee organized representatives from four local organizations to attend the Illinois State Board of Education's Summer Food Service training. Two of those organizations, the Champaign Park District and the Rantoul Recreation Department, agreed to sponsor the program. Both implemented their programs in June, and fed over 200 children daily.

"It's part of the day camp from now on," said Walter Smith, Facility Supervisor at Champaign's Douglass Center. "In addition to children from our day camp, children from Parkside-Mansard Square's summer program also participated. It was an excellent program." Bob Nuckols, Rantoul Recreation Youth Center Director, was also very happy with the summer program. "It was great," he said. "For our first year, it went very well."

The committee also worked to implement the SFSP at several public housing sites. With the help of housing residents, resource center managers, both city and county officials, the Illinois Hunger Coalition, and other community members, the committee: investigated the Housing Authority's situation and Commissioners' concerns; began outreach efforts in the housing complexes; talked with Housing Commissioners individually; and garnered letters of support from other state housing authorities and community groups. At the May Board of

Continued on page 6

Board Profile: Bill Creswell

by Lynn Crandall

As John Gardner once said, "There are men and women who make the world better just by being the kind of people they are." Bill Creswell is one of those kinds of people.

Although soft-spoken and unassuming, he is both articulate and knowledgeable. He speaks earnestly of the philosophy which has guided his life. "I always try to see the good in people, and keep focused on trying to do right by others."

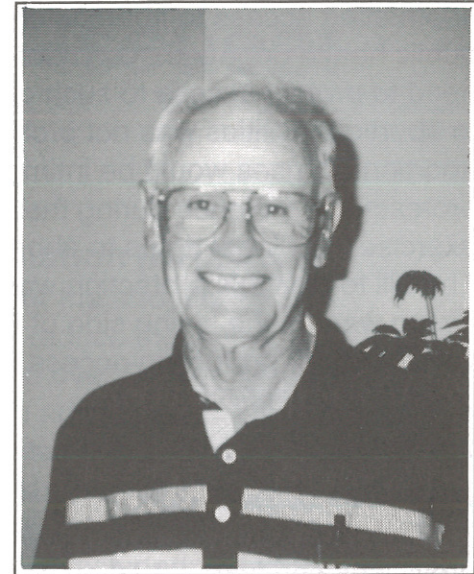
Influenced in his college years by then-President Truman, Bill put this philosophy into practice when he was drawn into health education. He saw it as a social concern. "I couldn't accept that some people suffered because they couldn't afford health care. Many problems arise from lack of proper health education or care."

Bill and his wife Jean brought their son and daughter to Champaign in 1962. As Professor of Health

Education at the University of Illinois, Bill focused his research on adolescent health. He served as department head of Health and Safety Studies from 1970 to 1980. Now a Professor Emeritus, he can sometimes be found on the golf course perfecting his game, or in a stream fly-fishing for that one big trout.

In 1991, Bill brought his extensive background in health studies to CCHCC. Those who've worked with him appreciate his willing attitude and thorough knowledge. "He's been an invaluable asset for me," says Catherine Crandall, who's worked with him on the Universal Health Care committee. "His input is always good, because of his academic background and his understanding of health care concerns. He's a great guy, who I can always rely on to be truly helpful."

As a board member, Bill's gently persuasive ways allow him to mediate disparate views on the hot health care reform topic. But he's also quick to stand up for his beliefs. "It bothers me



that health care is treated solely as a business. I think everyone that needs health care should be able to get it. Health care is a great problem in the United States that we need to solve."

As much as Bill has given to CCHCC, he feels that he's gotten back valuable lessons from working with board and staff members. "I've become more sensitive to people's needs," he says, "from watching the people at CCHCC try to help others."

The Health Care Consumers feels grateful to have Bill serving on the board, sharing his experience, knowledge, and real concern for people!

Children's Health

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Commissioners meeting, the program was narrowly rejected by a two-two tie (with one abstention). At the same meeting, however, the Board did go on public record as saying that the Authority would definitely sponsor the program in the summer of 1995.

The upcoming year will focus on children's health needs and the establishment of the School Breakfast Program in the rural areas of Champaign County. If you live outside the city limits of Champaign-Urbana and would like to see the breakfast program in your school, call Nisha at 352-6533 to find out how to get involved.

CCHCC gratefully acknowledges the contributions of time, baked goods, and hard work from all those who made the Senior Bake Sale such a success:

Grace Adams
Marie Adams
Gary Adelman
Maxime Belle
Edna Booker
George Brackemyre
Josephine Bradley Brown
Marjorie & Carl Brockman
Ruth Burnett
Eddie Carter
Phyllis Clark
Alta Claypool
Lennie Connerly
Nettie Cook
Mable Coombs
Lena Cramer
Bill Creswell
Gladys Fish
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Juanita Goodwin
Beauford & Helen Gore
Nancy Greenwalt
Marguerite Griffis
Helen Harvey
Thelma Hasler
Tim Howard
John Lee Johnson
Marjorie McGuire
Frances McKaufsky
Bernice Moore
Marian Nelson
Lilia Peters
Cleone Place
Lorene Primmer
Ida Lorraine Sapp
Elizabeth Scholebo
Renee Schloupt
Bertha Schmidt
Mamie Smith
Doc & Anne Tempero
Dorothy Utley
Verniece Wehmer
Inez Werts

Health Security Express Visits Champaign

from page 1

the crowd, as tears ran down her cheeks. "He was sick, but we waited until payday to take him to the doctor, because we had little money and no health insurance. He died of strep complications."

Impassioned stories like Perez-Wiseley's fueled the riders' courage when they met with some hostility along the way. "We were mobbed in Tulsa," Perez-Wiseley reported. "But the hostility doesn't stop us. An elderly lady with a walker was the first to step off the bus!"

In Champaign, cheers greeted the riders, and more cheers arose in response to their remarks. The positive momentum they brought with them created a sense of hope for change. As one rider said, "We're on our way to D.C., and we're going to make sure that Congress passes a **real** national health care reform bill!"

As in other cities, anti-reform counter-demonstrators (mostly anti-abortion protesters) also showed up at the rally. Their chants of "no abortions" fell on disinterested ears.

Showing their support by speaking at the event were State Rep. Laurel Prussing, 15th District Democratic Congressional candidate Paul Alexander, and Carol Browner, head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In a letter sent to Bazzell after the rally, Browner thanked the Health Care Consumers for hosting the Express, and applauded CCHCC's contributions to consumers, saying that "Every city and town would be lucky to have a resource like the Champaign County Health Care Consumers."

Browner and Prussing's comments served to echo the sentiments of many at the rally: people need to speak out and demand that Washington give this country universal health care. As one rider emphasized before reboarding the bus, "We're going to tell Congress that it's time this country became a place where people can live their lives without fear they'll be made destitute by a catastrophic illness."



Supporters of universal health care listen intently to speakers from the Health Security Express.

CCHCC wishes to thank
the following businesses for
their generous donations of
space and materials for the
Health Security Express
and the Medicare
100/Medicare Plus Senior
Bake Sale:

Cafe Kopi
Carmon's
K-Mart, Urbana

CCHCC MEMBERSHIP FORM

(Please clip out and return with your membership dues.)

Enclosed is my check for: \$ _____

\$50 - Friends of CCHCC

\$36 - Family Membership/Adopt-A-Senior

\$25 - Individual Membership

\$15 - Seniors Citizens/Students/Fixed Income

Change of Address:

Name/Phone: _____

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Contributions to CCHCC are tax-deductible.

Please return to: CCHCC, 44 E. Main, Suite 208, Champaign, IL 61820

CCHCC's Sixth Annual Phone-A-Thon

September 26 - October 6

Mark your calendar, turn off your answering machine, and find your checkbook for CCHCC's sixth annual Phone-A-Thon. In what has become one of the most important grassroots events in the county, members and volunteers will be contacting thousands of local consumers in this year's call to action.

For eight nights, dozens of volunteers will call thousands of CCHCC's members, friends, and supporters, enlisting their aid in the fight for quality, affordability, and accessibility in health care for every resident of Champaign County. As the battle on Capitol Hill drags on, casualties continue to rise as more

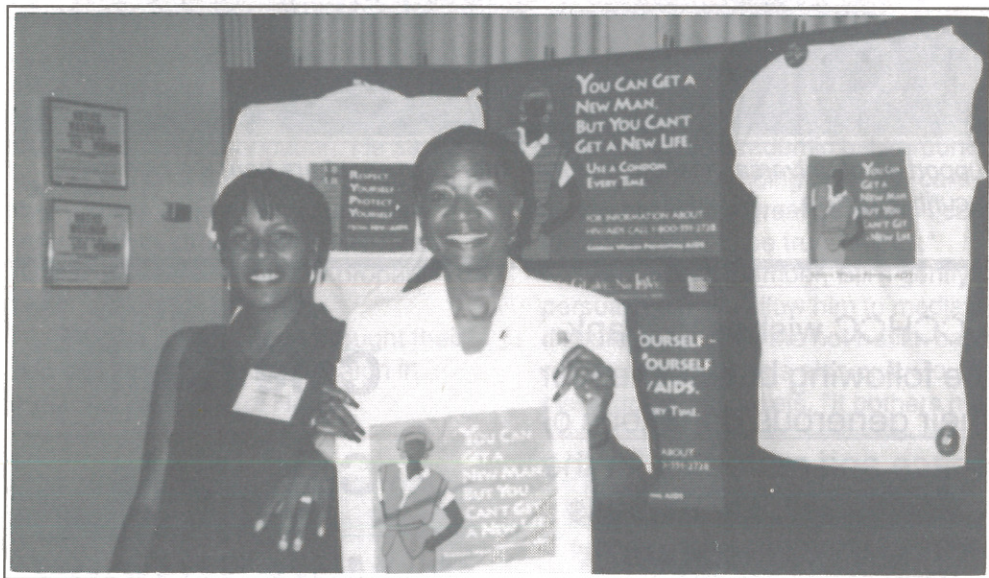
and more consumers are marginalized or excluded entirely from health care reform. But no matter what happens in Washington, projects in Champaign County like the Consumer Health Hotline, Opening Doors, and Medicare 100 and Medicare Plus will continue because of your support.

This year's Phone-A-Thon benefits you in several ways. First of all, it's an opportunity to join with thousands of others in Champaign County to force the derailed national health care reform debate back on track. Second, you will have a chance to give us your input on health care and CCHCC's efforts. Finally, through your contributions and membership renewals, you ensure that the CCHCC programs which are vital to our community remain for years to come.

Last year the Phone-A-Thon received over \$17,000 in pledges, a new record. This year we must work even harder. Despite the success of the summer door canvass in adding or renewing 500 members, we still have about 200 impoverished seniors who need to be enrolled in Medicare 100 through the Adopt-A-Senior program. In order to cover this gap and ensure that those seniors continue to get the health care they deserve, we've increased our goal this year by an additional \$3,000, bringing the total goal to \$20,000.

How can you help? Volunteer! From September 26 to October 6, volunteers are needed to staff the phone bank, stuff envelopes, and tally pledges. A light meal and snacks will be provided, and there will also be prizes donated by local merchants.

If you can volunteer one night, or have any questions, please call David or Ruth at 352-6533. Thanks in advance for your support!



Members of Georgia Women Preventing AIDS staff a booth at the National Black Women's Health Project 10th Anniversary Conference in Atlanta. Several Opening Doors advisory board members attended the conference in July, and Ex. Dir. Imani Bazzell gave a presentation on the Opening Doors Project (see story page 3).

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