CHAIRMAN’S MESSAGE

In academic medicine, we are constantly living through professional transitions. Each year, we graduate Brown medical students who move around the country (or stay here in Providence!) to pursue their residencies as newly minted MDs, and shortly thereafter welcome a new group of first year students to begin their medical school basic science years. Likewise, we bid farewell annually to our senior internal medicine and med-peds residents who graduate and move on to their chosen practices or fellowship training. Even before they depart, we begin orienting a new group of interns, fresh out of medical school. Within these defined periods of time, trainees repeatedly transition from one service to another, and attending physicians repeatedly welcome new trainees into their areas.

Stability and continued growth through these transitions is provided by faculty and leadership who have been around a sufficient period of time to provide the institutional memory essential to a healthy and high-quality culture. We are fortunate in the Department of Medicine to have an experienced faculty and leadership team who are committed to providing the highest quality of medical care, training and research. Faculty and leadership inevitably have their own transitions, and I would like to highlight three such transitions in this newsletter.

Edward “Ted” Lally has been a highly respected rheumatologist in the Rhode Island community for his entire career. He was recruited here to Rhode Island Hospital in 2005 after 17 years as Chief of Rheumatology at Roger Williams Hospital with the goals of upgrading our rheumatology program and starting a rheumatology fellowship. Ted has recruited and retained outstanding faculty and has overseen the development of a highly competitive fellowship, which has attracted top applicants, among them some of our own graduates. He has also maintained his national profile, in 2016 receiving a Distinguished Fellow Award from the American College of Rheumatology. Ted stepped down as Division Chief of Rheumatology in July and plans to retire from clinical medicine in February 2019. Dr. Anthony Reginato, Associate Professor of Medicine at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, has been named as interim Chief of the Division of Rheumatology. Ted stepped down as Division Chief of Rheumatology in July and plans to retire from clinical medicine in February 2019. Dr. Anthony Reginato, Associate Professor of Medicine at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, has been named as interim Chief of the Division of Rheumatology. Dr. Reginato has been an active researcher and mentor for our own residents and brings that focus and energy to pick up where Dr. Lally leaves off. We are all grateful for Ted’s contributions to our mission.

Continued on next page
Richard Besdine has announced that he will step down as Chief of our Division of Geriatrics and Palliative Care at the end of the current academic year. Richard was recruited in 2000 as the first David S. Greer Professor in Geriatric Medicine and Chief of the Division of Geriatrics and, except for the three-year hiatus to serve as interim Dean of the medical school, he has been Chief ever since. The Division has grown substantially in 18 years. Full-time faculty have grown from 2 physicians and 2 nurse practitioners to 15 geriatrics physicians, 8 palliative physicians and 6 NPs. In 2012, the Division was renamed Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine, and a Section of Palliative Medicine was created. Fully accredited fellowships were established in Geriatric Medicine (2002) and Palliative Medicine (2013). Joint education programs were established with Geriatric Psychiatry and its fellowship (2006). Robust clinical and educational programs in geriatrics and palliative care have been established at Providence VA, Providence VA Medical Center and Butler Hospital. The Division has launched, with funding from RIH and TMH, 5 co-management programs; geriatrics faculty members collaborate with surgical specialties (trauma surgery, colorectal surgery, joint replacement, and complex urology) to care together for vulnerable elderly specialist patients. Major quality improvements have been documented for these patients. To say that Richard is innovative is to engage in profound understatement! Richard has also served as a highly valued advisor to me during my time here as Chair. While he will be stepping down to spend more time with his beloved wife Fox Wettle (former Dean of the Brown School of Public Health) he will remain on the faculty to serve Brown and the Department of Medicine in a variety of roles. A national search is planned to identify the new Chief of Geriatrics and Palliative Care.

Angela Caliendo was recruited here from Emory University in 2013 to be Professor of Medicine, Executive Vice Chair of the Department of Medicine and Chief of the Division of General Internal Medicine. I brought her here to run the Department with me and to strengthen our Division of General Medicine, which is the heart and soul of our house staff education program and critically important for the quality of care delivered in our hospitals. By any measure, her tenure as Executive Vice Chair and Division Chief has been highly successful. Our inpatient Internal Medicine service is now geographically located in the Jane Brown Building, with demonstrable benefits in quality of care and efficiency. Our Primary Care General Medicine Practice has greatly expanded, with offices in the Brown Medicine Patient Center in East Providence and in East Greenwich. She spent nine months managing the Division of Hematology-Oncology and has been an important advisor to Howard Safran during his subsequent highly successful tenure as Hematology-Oncology Division Chief - another example of a successful transition, by the way. She has served as an advisor to countless junior faculty, offering her unique brand of honesty, practicality, humor and heartfelt encouragement. She has started a new fellowship in Addiction Medicine at a time when such training is a critical need in our state. She spearheaded the Development of the Brown Medicine Leadership Course, recognizing the critical need for leadership development in academic medicine. More than 50 individuals from Brown Medicine, other Foundations and Lifespan have now taken the course. Perhaps most importantly, she has served as the Interim Executive Director of Brown Physicians, Inc., the multi-specialty practice we have formed with five other Foundations to improve the delivery of health care to the citizens of Rhode Island. She has recently been unanimously approved by the BPI Board to serve as permanent President and Executive Director, responsibilities that will commence on October 1, 2018. A national search will be constituted shortly to identify an appropriate candidate to serve as Chief of General Medicine. Fortunately for us, she will continue in her duties as the Executive Vice Chair of the Department. Kelly McGarry, Director of the General Internal Medicine/Primary Care Program will serve as Interim Chief of General Internal Medicine.

I am extraordinarily grateful to Ted, Richard and Angie for their many contributions to our Department, Hospital partners and School of Medicine. I wish them every success in their future endeavors and look forward to our continued associations.

As I think back on my own transition in arriving at Brown from Case Western 8 years ago, I have come to regard such professional comings and goings as a process of ongoing renewal. Brown is fertile ground for professional growth and with such growth comes opportunity. I celebrate the contributions and legacy of our transitioning leaders and look forward with a sense of excitement and opportunity to those that will follow and thrive in their footsteps. It’s what we do.
Lifespan Receives Grants to Address Opioid Crisis and Antibiotics Resistance

In the past two months, Lifespan affiliates have received two major grants to establish Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE).

Opioid and Overdose Grant — A Chance For Rhode Island To Lead The Nation

First, the National Institute of General Medical Sciences awarded Rhode Island Hospital $11.8 million to establish the Center of Biomedical Research Excellence on Opioids and Overdose, the first center of its kind that addresses the opioid epidemic.

The COBRE on Opioids and Overdose in Rhode Island will be directed by principal investigators Josiah “Jody” Rich, MD, MPH and Traci Green, PhD, MSc. To bolster research quality and lend support to COBRE junior investigators, the award funds three research cores.

The Data and Research Core led by Brandon Marshall, PhD will provide quantitative expertise, methodological knowledge on study designs, and technological resources. The Translational and Transformational Core headed by Susan Ramsey, PhD and Traci Green, PhD, MSc will strengthen translational research in social, behavioral, and clinical sciences, as well as improve study dissemination. The Special Populations Core spearheaded by Curt Beckwith, MD and Timothy Flanigan, MD will assist in the recruitment process and provide guidance in conducting ethical research with vulnerable populations.

COBRE awards support the creation or augmentation of collaborative, multidisciplinary thematic research centers, and support innovative work that fosters the professional growth of junior investigators.

As a key component of the COBRE’s commitment to propelling the field of opioid and overdose research forward, Rhode Island Hospital has committed $120,000 per year to fund several pilot projects in each of the five years of Phase I. Through leveraging the exceptional talent and accomplishments thus far in Rhode Island, the Center of Research on Opioids and Overdose aims to support excellence in research essential to understanding the mechanisms underlying opioid use disorder and developing innovative solutions to the opioid epidemic.

9.4M NIH Grant Awarded to The Miriam Hospital

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) awarded a $9.4 million grant to The Miriam Hospital to create a COBRE dedicated to studying the causes of drug-resistance pathogens and identifying potential new drugs.

The five-year grant will allow researchers at The Miriam Hospital, Rhode Island Hospital and Brown University to delve into the causes of antibiotic resistance and identify potential new drugs.

Eleftherios Mylonakis, M.D., chief of infectious diseases at The Miriam Hospital and Rhode Island Hospital and the principal investigator for the new center notes that the increase of antibiotic-resistant pathogens is a worldwide threat.

“Resistance to antimicrobial therapies is a national and international crisis that threatens clinical practice from primary care to the most advanced medical interventions like organ transplantation and cancer chemotherapy. According to data from the CDC, more than 2 million people suffer infections from antibiotic-resistant bacteria each year in the United States and at least 23,000 people die as a result,” Mylonakis said.

The new Center for Antimicrobial Resistance and Therapeutic Discovery (CARTD) will foster the work of existing researchers while encouraging junior investigators to devote their talents toward this growing public health issue. Its multidisciplinary approach will build on existing research at The Miriam Hospital and Lifespan to create an innovative, state-of-the-art biomedical research center that can serve as a resource for other researchers and investigators in the region.

"When it comes to addressing the largest public health issues of our time, some of the most important research is taking place right here in Rhode Island at Lifespan-affiliated hospitals,” said Timothy J. Babineau, MD, president and CEO of Lifespan. “Our ability to secure these grants not only allows these researchers and their staffs to carry out their vital work but also helps support investment and jobs in Rhode Island’s growing knowledge and healthcare economies.”
Miriam’s renowned HIV/AIDS program receives $9.1 million federal grant

The Miriam Hospital has been awarded a $9.1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to fund new and continuing initiatives at its Providence/Boston Center for AIDS Research (CFAR), a collaboration between the Lifespan health system, Brown University and Boston University/Boston Medical Center.

The five-year grant supports a major new relationship between two prominent universities: Brown University in Rhode Island and Boston University in Massachusetts, along with their affiliated medical centers, Lifespan and Boston Medical Center. The relationship significantly enhances the substantial resources and expertise of the Providence/Boston CFAR.

The grant also reflects a timely new emphasis of CFAR to address the relationship between HIV and substance use disorder – just as public health officials are seeking to curb the nation’s deadly and costly opioid epidemic. Each of the participating academic institutions operate NIH-funded HIV and alcohol research centers.

Based at The Miriam Hospital, the Providence/Boston CFAR has secured continuous NIH funding since its founding in 1998 by former infectious disease chief Charles C. J. Carpenter, MD, and this year it’s celebrating its 20th anniversary. Its research is aimed at preventing and treating the disease here in the United States and in highly pandemic regions around the world including, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Central Europe.

Hematology-Oncology Division Receives AHA Award

Olin Liang, PhD, from the Division of Hematology/Oncology, received a 2018 American Heart Association Transformational Project Award in the amount of $300,000 over three years. This funding mechanism of the AHA supports highly innovative, high-impact projects that build on work in progress that could ultimately lead to critical discoveries or major advancements in the field of cardiovascular research. The title of Dr. Liang’s study is “The role of endothelial to hematopoietic transition in the pathogenesis of pulmonary hypertension”. The long-term goal of this project is to elucidate pathogenic mechanisms and develop novel curative therapies for pulmonary hypertension.

NIH Grants Awarded For HIV Research

Dr. Rami Kantor, of the Infectious Diseases division, has been awarded two NIH grants. The first is an R01 entitled ‘Real Time Phylogeny and Contact Tracing to Disrupt HIV Transmission’, which is in close collaboration with the Rhode Island Department of Health, and is aimed at real time integration of phylogenetic inference with contact tracing procedures to augment public health efforts to reduce HIV transmission in Rhode Island. The second is a K24 mentoring grant entitled ‘HIV Drug Resistance, Monitoring and Transmission’, which focuses on mentoring junior investigators in topics such as the development of drug resistance to HIV medications, treatment monitoring of patients living with HIV, and disruption of HIV transmission, combining the three R01s he is currently a Principal Investigator on. In addition to the above mentioned recently-funded R01, Dr. Kantor is also a PI on an R01 entitled ‘Optimizing HIV Treatment Monitoring Strategies under Resource Constraints’, together with Prof. Joe Hogan (Brown Biostatistics); and an R01 entitled ‘HIV Treatment Failure and Drug Resistance in Western Kenyan Children’, together with Prof. Rachel Vreeman (Indiana University Pediatrics).

Brown Participates in Multi-Center Bias Reduction Study

The Brown Department of Medicine is one of 20 academic Departments of Medicine across the country participating in a multi-center, NIH-supported, IRB-approved project called “Bias Reduction in Internal Medicine” (BRIM). This 2-year project is led by Molly Carnes, MD, MS, Professor, Departments of Medicine, Psychiatry, and Industrial & Systems Engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The goal of BRIM is to raise faculty awareness regarding bias in our work as physicians and educators by applying a validated educational intervention entitled “Breaking the Bias Habit™” with a goal of reducing such bias.

By raising awareness, particularly regarding bias based on gender, race, ethnicity and other factors, BRIM hopes to demonstrate an alteration in behaviors with respect to recruitment, opportunity, salary, promotion and other factors within our Department. Our outcomes will be a change in attitudes and eventually, an improvement in member recruitment, retention and satisfaction.

As part of this project, several Department of Medicine faculty will be trained as Local BRIM Implementers, who will be able to conduct the educational workshop being used in BRIM. In this way, BRIM will build local capacity within our department for ongoing education, which can be applied to residents, new faculty and as a “refresher” for faculty who have already had the original curriculum. Please address any questions to Dominick Tammaro, MD, who is serving as the Lead Site Coordinator for this exciting project.
New Hires at The Cardiovascular Institute

Sebhat Erqou, MD, PhD, is a cardiologist at Lifespan Cardiovascular Institute. His research areas include preventive cardiology with a focus on cardiovascular disease risk factors, racial differences in outcomes, and the link between HIV and heart disease. Dr. Erqou has been honored with the Young Investigator Award three times by the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections.

Jon K. Lambrecht, MD, FACC, is a board-certified cardiologist at the Lifespan Cardiovascular Institute at Rhode Island, The Miriam and Newport hospitals. He has a clinical interest in congestive heart failure and echocardiography. He has developed an expertise in clinical cardiology during 25 years of practice. He received his medical degree from Eastern Virginia Medical School, and completed his internship and residency in internal medicine at Roger Williams Hospital. He completed fellowships in cardiology and interventional cardiology through the Brown Integrated Hospital Program.

Christopher J. Luttmann, MD, is a board-certified cardiologist at the Lifespan Cardiovascular Institute at Rhode Island, The Miriam, and Newport hospitals. He has particular expertise in the direct evaluation and management of patients with cardiovascular disease through over 30 years of experience. He earned his medical degree from Albany Medical College of Union University of Albany in New York. Dr. Luttmann completed his internship and residency in internal medicine at Lankenau Hospital in Philadelphia and a fellowship in cardiology through the Brown University Integrated Hospitals Program. He has been listed as one of “Rhode Island’s Top Docs” by Rhode Island Monthly on multiple occasions.

Andrew A. Nowak, MD, is a board-certified cardiologist at the Lifespan Cardiovascular Institute at Rhode Island, The Miriam and Newport hospitals. He earned his medical degree from the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester. He specializes in noninvasive diagnostic cardiac imaging and consultative cardiology. Dr. Nowak completed an internship and residency in internal medicine at UMASS Medical Center and a fellowship in cardiology through the Brown University combined program.

Brief news and honors from The Cardiovascular Institute

J. Dawn Abbott, MD is the Co-Chair of the Fellows Summit for Complex Cases Society of Coronary Angiography (SCAI) and Interventions in 2019. She is also Chair of the Women in Innovations Committee of SCAI and of the American College of Cardiology NCDR Cath PCI Research and Publications Committee through 2019.

Karen Aspy, MD served as Medical Board President from 2016-2018 of the American Heart Association – Southern New England Chapter. She continues to serve as a member on several committees with the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology. With the National Lipid Association, she is a National Board Member At-Large and served as Secretary of the Northeast Lipid Association (NELA) Chapter from 2017-2018.

Antony Chu, MD is part of the ACC Curriculum Design Committee. He will continue to be on the Brown Medical Faculty Executive Committee (MFEC).

Athena Poppas, MD has been appointed to serve as Vice President of the American College of Cardiology (ACC) starting in March 2019 and then serve as President in 2020.

Philip Stockwell, MD was the recipient of the 2018 Raymon S. Riley, MD, Teaching Award. In his name, the Division of Cardiology at Rhode Island Hospital has established The Raymon S. Riley, MD Memorial Endowment Teaching Award to honor his legacy of extraordinary care, friendship, and his passion for education and lifelong learning. This award is chosen annually by the fellows of the Cardiovascular Institute.
Recent Grant Activity at the Cardiovascular Institute

J Dawn Abbott, MD
Svelte Medical Systems, Inc.
The OPTIMIZE Trial to Assess the Procedural and Clinical Value of the Svelte IDS and RX Sirolimus-Eluting Coronary Stent Systems for the Treatment of Artherosclerotic Lesions in a Randomized Study

Sino Medical Sciences Technology, Inc./NOVELLA
The PIONEER III Trial: A Prospective Multicenter Global Randomized Controlled Trial Assessing the Safety and Efficacy of the BuMA Supreme Biodegradable Drug Coated Coronary Stent System for Coronary Revascularization in Patients with Stable Coronary Artery Disease or Non-ST Segment Evaluation Acute Coronary Syndromes

Abbott Vascular, Inc.
The Evaluation of Treatment Strategies for Severe Calcific Coronary Arteries: Orbital Artherectomy vs. Conventional Angioplasty Technique Prior to Implantation of Drug-Eluting Stents (ECLIPSE)

Rox Medical, Inc.
A Prospective, Randomized, Adaptive, Double-Blind, Sham-Controlled, Multicenter Study to Evaluate the ROX Coupler in Subjects with Hypertension

Karen Aspy, MD
AKCEA Therapeutics
ISIS 678354-CS2 (APOCHIII-LRx) A Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled, Dose-Ranging Phase 2 Study of ISIS 678354 Administered Subcutaneously to Patients with Hypertriglyceridemia and Established Cardiovascular Disease (CVD)

Gaurav Choudhary, MD
Advance CTR
Role of Skeletal Muscle Mitochondrial Supercomplexes in Exercise Intolerance

Paul Gordon, MD
Cardiovascular Research Foundation
Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement to UNload the Left Ventricle in Patients With ADvanced Heart Failure (TAVR UNLOAD)

Daichi Sankyo, Inc.
Edoxaban versus Standard of Care and Their Effects on Clinical Outcomes in Patients Having Undergone Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation-in Atrial Fibrillation

Volcano Corp.
Physiologic Assessment of Coronary Stenosis Following PCI (DEFINE PCI)

Gideon Koren, MD
NIH
Regulation of Ubiquitin ligases: A Novel Therapy for Cardiac Arrhythmias

Nishant Shah, MD
Advance CTR
Automated Assessment of Nuclear Stress Test Appropriateness and Downstream Patient Outcomes

Christopher Song, MD
Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation
Apixaban for the Reduction of Thrombo-Embolism in Patients with Device-Detected Sub-Clinical Atrial Fibrillation (Artesia)

Peter Soukas, MD
Reflow Medical, Inc.
A Non-Randomized Study Evaluating the Use of the Reflow Medical Wingman Catheter to Cross Chronic Total Occlusions in Infrainguinal Arteries

PQ Bypass, Inc.
The DETOUR II Study-PQ Bypass System for Femoropopliteal Bypass II

Surmodics, Inc.
The Randomized and Controlled Noninferiority Trial to Evaluate Safety and Clinical Efficacy of the SurVeil Drug-Coated Balloon in the Treatment of Subjects with Stenotic Lesions of the Femoropopliteal Artery Compared to the Medtronic IMPACT Admiral

Rayan Yousefzai, MD
Merck & Company
A Randomized Parallel-Group, Placebo-Controlled, Double-Blind, Event-Driven, Multi-Center Pivotal Phase III Clinical Outcome Trials of Efficacy and Safety of the Oral sGC Stimulator Vericiguat in Subjects with Heart failure with reduced Ejection Fraction

Awards and Honors for Faculty

Department of Medicine Physicians Honored among Top 40 under Forty

Rebecca Reece, MD (Division of Infectious Diseases) and Sakeena Raza, MD (Division of Geriatrics) were among the honorees in this year’s Providence Business News 2018 40 Under Forty competition. They were honored at the awards program in July at Aldrich Mansion in Warwick.

The 40 Under Forty winners were selected based on career success and community involvement. All are young professionals who have committed to making a difference on a local, national or international scale.

Dr. Allan Tunkel, of the Division of Infectious Diseases, was presented with the 2018 Clinical Teacher Award from the Infectious Diseases Society of America at their national meeting in San Francisco on October 6th, 2018.

The Clinical Teacher Award honors a career involved in teaching clinical infectious diseases to fellows, residents, or medical students and recognizes excellence as a clinician and motivation to teach the next generation.
Faculty Honored with Beckwith Family Award for Outstanding Teaching

The Beckwith Family Research and Education Fund has been established at The Alpert Medical School through generous gifts to the endowment from the Beckwith Family Foundation.

The endowment Fund is used to support the education and research mission of the Department of Medicine, with an emphasis on the education and training of medical residents.

Each year the Fund supports the presentation of the Annual Brown Medical School Department of Medicine Beckwith Family Award for Outstanding Teaching. This award is to recognize superb teaching by its faculty. The recipients are nominated and chosen by students, residents, physicians, program and course directors in the Brown Medical School Department of Medicine. Each winner is presented with a plaque and a cash prize.

Kate Cahill, MD  
Assistant Professor of Medicine, Clinician Educator

Lauralyn Cannistra, MD  
Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine

Eric Gartman, MD  
Assistant Professor of Medicine

Rami Kantor, MD  
Associate Professor Medicine

Humera Khurshid, MD  
Assistant Professor of Medicine, Clinician Educator

Michelle Lally, MD  
Associate Professor Medicine

Andrew T. Levinson, MD  
Assistant Professor of Medicine, Clinician Educator

Jill O’Brien, MD  
Assistant Professor of Medicine, Clinician Educator

New Hires in the Division of General Internal Medicine

Christina Bahng, MD joined the Division in October. She will be working as an attending on the teaching service of the inpatient general internal medicine wards, as well as precepting in the Center for Primary Care and working at the ACI. Dr. Bahng was born and raised in South Korea before moving to Southern California. She completed her medical degree at Creighton Medical School in Omaha, NE and the Brown Internal Medicine Residency at Rhode Island Hospital. Her professional interests include international health and hematology/oncology.

Erica Brown, MD joined the Division in July. She attended Tufts University School of Medicine and completed the Brown Internal Medicine Residency at Rhode Island Hospital. She will be working as an attending on the teaching service of the inpatient general internal medicine wards, as well as precepting in the Center for Primary Care. Dr. Brown will also be seeing primary care patients in East Greenwich and East Providence.

Nishi Dedania, MD joined the Division in August. She will be working as an attending on the teaching service of the inpatient general internal medicine wards, as well as precepting in the Center for Primary Care. Originally from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, she has been traveling across cities to complete her education and training: undergraduate at Columbia University in New York City and medical school at Jefferson in Philadelphia. Most recently, she finished her dual training in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics at University of Illinois in Chicago. Her professional interests include global health, medical education and quality improvement.

Vidya Gopinath, MD joined the Division in September. She attended the University Of Virginia School Of Medicine and was in the Generalist Scholars Program, which emphasized primary care. She completed the Brown Internal Medicine Residency at Rhode Island Hospital. She will be working as an attending on the teaching service of the inpatient general internal medicine wards, as well as precepting in the Center for Primary Care. Dr. Gopinath will also be seeing primary care patients in East Greenwich and East Providence focusing on women’s health.

Sheridan Reiger, MD joined the Division in August. He will be working as an attending on the teaching service of the inpatient general internal medicine wards, as well as precepting in the Center for Primary Care. He is a graduate of Cornell University and obtained his medical degree at The University of Washington in Seattle. While at the University of Washington, he also obtained a Master’s in Public Health with a focus in Epidemiology. He completed his residency at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, MA in Internal Medicine & Primary Care. His current professional interests are reducing healthcare utilization, supporting family and other informal caregivers, and home based care including visiting patients in their homes.
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