

2nd Annual ***Salud America!*** Scientific Summit Report

September 22-24, 2010 • San Antonio, Texas



Salud America!

The RWJF Research Network
to Prevent Obesity Among
Latino Children



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

 INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH PROMOTION RESEARCH
UT HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER®
SAN ANTONIO

2nd Annual **Salud America!** Scientific Summit Report

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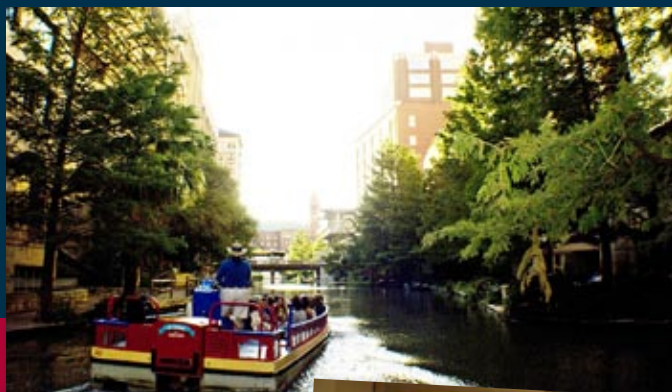
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Salud America!, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), conducted its 2nd Annual Scientific Summit on September 22-24, 2010, at the Hotel Contessa in San Antonio, Texas. This Summit Report is a description of the event.

Salud America! aims to unite, and increase the number of, Latino researchers engaged in research on environmental and policy solutions to the obesity epidemic among Latino children. The network is directed by the Institute for Health Promotion Research at The UT Health Science Center at San Antonio. For more information, visit www.salud-america.org.



Executive Summary

Salud America! Makes Strides to Curb Latino Childhood Obesity

Over the last two years, *Salud America!* has created the first national research agenda to examine the causes and consequences of obesity among Latino children.

We built an online network of 1,700 people seeking to prevent it.

We launched e-communications, Web sites and videos to raise awareness about the severity of the problem.

And we're starting to see some encouraging news. For the first time in three decades, obesity rates have leveled off among Latino kids in California, the *San Francisco Chronicle* [reported](#) in August.

But we're just getting warmed up.

Case in point: Our 20 *Salud America!* pilot investigators, who are only halfway through their RWJF research projects, are making significant progress on a variety of nutrition, physical activity and policy issues affecting Latinos.



Amelie Ramirez

Our pilots' work was on display at our 2nd Annual Scientific Summit, which was smaller in scale than last year's [summit](#) but no less productive:

- Most pilots are on track with recruiting study participants;
- Several already have developed new surveys, tools and products;
- More than half have presented their project and results at a regional or national conference, or to a group of community leaders or policy-makers;
- Many have had abstracts or posters accepted for presentation; and
- Many have been featured in newspapers or Web sites.

Our 20 investigators are using their funding to get a foothold at their institutions and build up their careers in childhood obesity research. Many of them already are preparing to embark on larger-scale, and hopefully more influential, work.

For example, more than three quarters of our researchers have submitted grant applications based directly on their pilot work or other work in childhood obesity. That's good news in the fight against Latino childhood obesity.

What's Next for RWJF in Childhood Obesity?

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) has a lofty goal: reversing the national childhood obesity epidemic by 2015.

To achieve its goal, RWJF is focusing on creating policy and environmental change that will help the population as a whole and those at highest risk, such as Latinos, said Dr. Laura Leviton, RWJF special advisor for evaluation, at the Summit.

What does this entail?

It will take three intertwined activities: producing targeted research to build evidence of what works; supporting specific action to change policies and environments so they support healthy living; and advocating for these strategies with leaders from all sectors at the national, state and local levels.

"Will we get there by 2015?" Leviton asked. "Not unless we focus. Not unless we shift from retail approach to wholesale. Not unless we address the situation of Latinos."

RWJF's efforts focus on six [policy priorities](#):

- Ensure that all foods and beverages served and sold in schools meet or exceed the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Increase access to high-quality, affordable foods through new or improved grocery stores and healthier corner stores and bodegas.



Laura Leviton

- Increase the time, intensity and duration of physical activity during the school day and out-of-school programs.
- Increase physical activity by improving the built environment in communities.
- Use pricing strategies—both incentives and disincentives—to promote the purchase of healthier foods.
- Reduce youth exposure to unhealthy food marketing through regulation, policy and effective industry self-regulation.

RWJF is working on implementing these priorities in the context of federal-level changes, such as bills on nutrition and transportation currently pending in Congress.

Salud America! is playing a role too.

Leviton said the network should keep "doing what it is doing" to conduct research, build the field of researchers and raise awareness of the cultural specificity of obesity.

"Speed up the adoption of strategies in Latino communities," she said, "and adapt what we know or that we discovered in Latino communities to the situation of Latinos."

At that point, reversing the trend of childhood obesity becomes an attainable goal.

The RWJF Center: Addressing Childhood Obesity in the United States

Obesity is taking its toll on U.S. children.

The number of kids hospitalized due to obesity has doubled in recent years and more suffer from early onset of adult diseases like diabetes, increasing the nation's overall health care costs, said Mildred Thompson, deputy director of the RWJF Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity on Day 2 of the summit.

That's why change is needed, Thompson said.

And that's why the RWJF Center is working with Foundation grantees and federal policy-makers to create systemic, sustainable changes to reduce childhood obesity rates, especially in communities of color and lower-income areas.

"We can't continue to let our children walk down this path of lifelong consequences," said Thompson, also of PolicyLink. "To really address childhood obesity, we have got to take a look at the energy imbalance."

"We've got to make sure that we broaden the discussion and that we're at the debates of all these legislative processes that are underway. This is a window that's open right now."

Opportunities abound for change at the federal level, too, Thompson said.

Some of the legislative and administrative actions that can



Mildred Thompson

have an impact on childhood obesity include:

- The Child Nutrition and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act, which authorizes, and provides funding and regulation for, federal school meal and child nutrition programs;
- The Elementary & Secondary Education Act, which appropriates federal funding for school districts nationwide and sets education policy;
- The Federal Transportation Reauthorization, which authorizes federal programs for highways, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and public transportation;
- The Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI), a public-private partnership to attract fresh food retail investment in underserved communities by providing critical one-time loan and grant financing; and
- The Farm Bill, the primary federal agricultural and food policy legislation.

"We've got to make sure that we broaden the discussion and that we're at the debates of all these legislative processes that are underway," Thompson said. "This is a window that's open right now. We don't know how much longer it's going to be open."



Charlotte Pratt



Melissa Nelson Laska

Panel: Funding Opportunities in Childhood Obesity Research

How does a new researcher go about getting funding?

The research idea is the key, said Dr. Charlotte Pratt, program director for the Division of Prevention and Population Sciences at the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.

Pratt, who offered several tips for seeking funding, urged young investigators to get started by drafting an innovative research idea, getting familiar with existing literature but not rehashing prior work, and asking for feedback on your idea.

“Share your ideas with colleagues, mentors and NIH program directors,” said Pratt, who also touted the NIH’s [new video](#) that offers tips for applicants. “Also, use the [NIH Project Reporter](#) to find who has grants in your institution, and invite them to be on your research team.”

Several organizations offer their own grants or list other grants:

- [RWJF Calls for Proposals](#)
- [NIH Obesity Grants](#)
- [National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research \(NCCOR\) Obesity Grants](#)
- [Live Smart Texas](#)

RWJF also funds research through Healthy Eating Research (HER), a national program that supports research on policy and environmental strategies with potential to promote healthy eating among children

to prevent childhood obesity.

HER has issued 10 calls for proposals (CFPs) over the past five years, funding 76 grants, said Dr. Melissa Nelson Laska, an HER faculty research associate.

Laska urged people to [sign up](#) for details on HER’s upcoming CFPs.

“We want to build a vibrant, multidisciplinary field of research and a diverse network of researchers, and ensure that findings are effectively communicated to inform policies and guide the development of effective solutions,” Laska said.

Pratt, meanwhile, also touted several new training opportunities for young researchers, such as the [NHLBI’s research training and career development](#) efforts.

Video: NIH Tips for Applicants



A New Model for Assessing Policy Contributions

“I am not a policy person.”

This was the response from some *Salud America!* pilot investigators when asked about their role in policy contribution, said Dr. Judith Ottoson, an independent evaluation consultant and member of the *Salud America!* National Advisory Committee.



Judith Ottoson

Yet every pilot investigator contributes to policy development at some level, Ottoson said.

“Policy permeates every one of your contexts,” Ottoson told researchers at the summit. “The difference is not that we’re policy people or not policy people, but that we’re all asked to think about policy and think beyond our own study.”

Ottoson interviewed all 20 *Salud America!* pilot investigators over the past year.

She sought to gauge their policy contributions and tell them about a new model, the Science-Policy-Public-Evaluation Spectra, which she and other experts developed to assess policy contribution and field-building.

The first spectrum is the “public”—the degree to which the public views an issue, such as obesity, as a problem. The next spectrum includes the multiple stages of “policy”—planning, developing policy, enacting it, and following up post-enactment. Each of these stages in turn includes specific tasks like creating awareness, framing the issue, and mobilization. The last spectrum is “science” and “evaluation”—in which

researchers determine factors that impact policy, assess needs, test interventions and evaluate.

The spectra illustrate how these levels are organized and interact with each other. For example, the outcomes of the science and evaluation spectrum can influence policy planning by describing the problem, or policy enactment by framing the action. Further, an engaged and interested public can influence policy as well.

“What we’re trying to do with the spectra is take this mystery of policy and policy contribution, and name it, frame it and see it, so that we can discuss it and figure out how we’re going to make contributions to it at some level,” Ottoson said.

Ottoson worked with pilots to see how their work fits on the spectra.

“It’s been a mutual learning process,” she said. “The pilots have helped shape the spectra.”

Some pilots are contributing to policy formation by examining causes of and trends in Latino childhood obesity. Others are interested in raising awareness, mobilizing people or reframing issues for the Latino population. Still others are assessing policy access and equity, to determine whether policies should continue, change or end.

Many are doing several of these things.

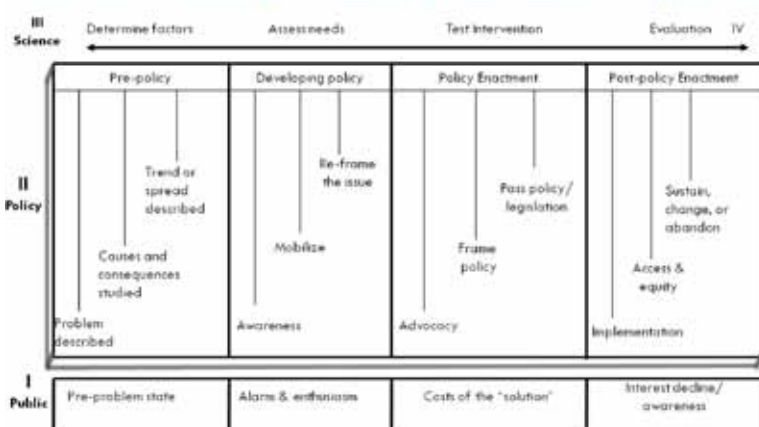
“Policy is not a point in time...policy is a process,” said Ottoson, noting that researchers can contribute through presentations, coalitions, media stories, reports, and publications at the national, state, regional or organizational level.

After her interviews and joint exploration with pilot investigators, Ottoson said they were far more attuned to the impact they were already having on policy. And although most pilots weren’t directly advocating for policy change, Ottoson said, they’re working, or have the potential to work, with organizations that are.

Pilots also were motivated to build on that impact.

“There are a lot of different points on this continuum where you have potential to make contributions to policy,” Ottoson told pilots. “And many of these balls need to be kept in the air at the same time...and you may need to move ahead on many points at one time.”

Science-Policy-Public-Evaluation Spectra



Pilot Investigators Making Progress in Latino Families



The 11 *Salud America!* “family” pilot investigators are making significant progress on a variety of nutrition, physical activity and policy issues affecting Latinos.

Several already have developed new surveys or tools.

Nearly all have presented their project at a non-*Salud America!* scientific conference, or to a group of community leaders or policy-makers. Most have had abstracts or posters accepted for presentation or been featured in newspapers or on Web sites.

The pilots also are using their funding to get a foothold at their institutions and submit new grants in childhood obesity research.

All pilot investigators currently are writing research briefs about their project results and policy implications. Briefs will be available in early 2011.



Salud America! Family Pilot Investigators

Dr. Shari Barkin, Vanderbilt University Medical Center
“Increasing Access to Physical Activity and Use of Community Recreation Centers by Latino Families to Reduce Pediatric Obesity”

Dr. Nelda Mier, Texas A&M Health Science Center
“Assessing the Built Environment in Colonias to Influence Policy Promoting Physical Activity in Mexican-American Children and Families”

Dr. Angela Wiley, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
“Abriendo Caminos—Clearing the Path”

Dr. Dina Castro, University of North Carolina
“Growing Healthy Kids”

Dr. Dharma Cortes, University of Massachusetts Boston
“Esto es Mejor: Improving Food Purchasing Selection Among Low-Income, Spanish-Speaking Latinos Through Social Marketing Messages”

Dr. Carmen Nevarez, Public Health Institute, California
“Evaluation of the Impact of a Menu-Labeling Program (Smart Menu/La Salud Tiene Sabor) in South Los Angeles”

Dr. Miriam Vega, Latino Commission on AIDS, New York
“La Familia en la Cocina”

Dr. Alexy Arauz Boudreau, Massachusetts General Hospital
“A Family Approach to Addressing Lifestyle Decision in Obesity and Diabetes”

Dr. Harris Huberman, SUNY Downstate Medical Center
“Primeros Pasos Parenting Newsletters: A Low-Intensity Approach to Prevent Obesity in Latino Children”

Dr. Javier Rosado, Florida State University
“A Measurement of Obesity: BMI Screenings Across Two Settings”

Dr. Myriam Torres, U. of South Carolina Research Foundation
“Juntas Podemos [Together We Can]: Empowering Latinas To Shape Policy To Prevent Childhood Obesity”

Pilot Investigators Making Progress in Latino Communities



The six *Salud America!* “community” pilot investigators are making significant progress on a variety of nutrition, physical activity and policy issues affecting Latinos.

Several already have developed new surveys or tools.

Nearly all have presented their project at a non-*Salud America!* scientific conference, or to a group of community leaders or policy-makers. Most have had abstracts or posters accepted for presentation or been featured in newspapers or on Web sites.

The pilots also are using their funding to get a foothold at their institutions and submit new grants in childhood obesity research.

All pilot investigators currently are writing research briefs about their project results and policy implications. Briefs will be available in early 2011.

Salud America! Community Pilot Investigators

Dr. Robert Dudley, Community Health Center, Connecticut

“Healthy Tomorrows for Latina Teens”

Dr. Norma Olvera, University of Houston

“From Mothers to Daughters: A Physical Activity Dosage Intervention to Impact Adiposity”

Dr. Cristina Barroso, University of Texas School of Public Health, Brownsville

“Body Image Perceptions Among Latinos”

Dr. Rebecca London, Stanford University School of Education

“Linking After-School Program Participation With Latino Youths’ Obesity and Physical Fitness Outcomes”

Dr. Meizi He, UT San Antonio

“Building a Healthy Temple—A Faith-Based Community Participatory Research Project for Preventing Childhood Obesity Among Latino Families”

Dr. Monika Stodolska, University of Illinois

“Crime, Physical Activity and Outdoor Recreation Among Latino Adolescents”

Pilot Investigators Making Progress in Latino Schools



The three *Salud America!* “school” pilot investigators are making significant progress on a variety of nutrition, physical activity and policy issues affecting Latinos.

Several already have developed new surveys or tools.

Nearly all have presented their project at a non-*Salud America!* scientific conference, or to a group of community leaders or policy-makers. Most have had abstracts or posters accepted for presentation or been featured in newspapers or on Web sites.

The pilots also are using their funding to get a foothold at their institutions and submit new grants in childhood obesity research.

All pilot investigators currently are writing research briefs about their project results and policy implications. Briefs will be available in early 2011.

Salud America! School Pilot Investigators

Dr. Zan Gao, Texas Tech University
“Integrating Dance Dance Revolution to Promote Urban Latino School Children’s Physical Health and Academic Achievement: Project GAME”

Dr. Emma Sanchez, San Francisco State University
“Informing Latino Childhood Obesity Prevention: The Role of Physical Education Policies in California”

Dr. Claudia Galindo, University of Maryland, Baltimore County
“Young Latino Children’s Weight Changes: Examination of Individual, Family and School Factors”

Meet the Experts



Rarely do you get a chance to “talk shop” with leaders in your field.

That’s why *Salud America!* conducted a “Meet the Experts” session before the official start of its 2nd Annual Scientific Summit.

Summit attendees—mainly pilot investigators and their colleagues—were able to meet, network with, and ask questions of some of the most influential researchers and evaluators in the childhood obesity prevention field.

The session featured these experts in these areas:

Developing Policy

- Larry Green, Dr.P.H., University of California, San Francisco
- Judith Ottoson, Ed.D., Independent Consultant

Building Assessment Instruments

- Nancy Butte, Ph.D., Baylor College of Medicine

Federal-Level Perspectives

- Charlotte Pratt, Ph.D., National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute
- Robin Hamre, M.P.H., U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Technical Assistance and Resources

- Mildred Thompson, M.S.W., RWJF Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity
- Melissa Nelson Laska, Ph.D., Healthy Eating Research

Career Development

- Frank Penedo, Ph.D., University of Miami
- Amy Yaroch, Ph.D., Center for Human Nutrition

“The opportunity to engage experts in active discussion was invaluable,” said *Salud America!* Pilot Investigator Dr. Shari Barkin. “Ideas were moved from the theoretical to the applied state, allowing action to result from discussion.”

Summit Fun

Fun Activities Add to Summit Experience



Science, research and networking headlined this year's Scientific Summit.

But we squeezed some fun in, too.

The summit launched with a boat ride along San Antonio's scenic River Walk to a festive reception on September 22 at Club Giraud, a private dining club steeped in history where attendees were able to enjoy fine food and company.

Then, during the summit agenda on September 23-24, attendees were able to take a Salsa dance lesson or enjoy a scenic walking tour of San Antonio's culturally rich downtown.

We even spiced up our between-panel breaks by playing a unique video that featured Latin dance moves and a catchy musical beat. The video spurred attendees to get out of their seats and move and dance together.

"We hope attendees enjoyed these unique activities while they also learned a lot about the latest efforts to reduce obesity among Latino children," said *Salud America!* Director Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez. "We hope this was a memorable, motivating experience."



Summit Agenda



Agenda: 2nd Annual *Salud America!* Scientific Summit

Wednesday, September 22, 2010 **Thursday, Sept. 23, 2010** (cont.)

6–9 p.m. **Summit Reception, Club Giraud, San Antonio**

3:20–3:45 p.m. **Break**

Thursday, September 23, 2010

3:45–4:35 p.m.

8–9 a.m. **Meet the Experts Session**

Community Pilot Panel 2: “Policy Changes that Impact Latinos”

9–9:15 a.m. **Welcome/Introductions/*Salud America!* Report Card**

Amelie G. Ramirez, Dr.P.H., Director, *Salud America!*
 Laura Leviton, Ph.D., Special Advisor for Evaluation, RWJF

Pilots: Rebecca London, Meizi He and Monika Stodolska
Respondent: Charlotte Pratt, Ph.D., National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute

9:15–9:45 a.m. **Keynote Speech**

Judith Ottoson, Ed.D., Independent Evaluation Consultant

4:35–5:30 p.m.

9:45–10:35 a.m.

Family Pilot Panel 1: “Policy Changes that Impact Latinos”

Pilots: Shari Barkin, Nelda Mier and Angela Wiley
Respondent: Robert Garcia, J.D., The City Project

School Pilot Panel: “Policy Changes that Impact Latinos”

Pilots: Zan Gao, Emma Sanchez and Claudia Galindo
Respondent: Elva Arredondo, Ph.D., San Diego State University

10:35–11 a.m. **Break**

11 a.m.–Noon

Family Pilot Panel 2: “Policy Changes that Impact Latinos”

Pilots: Dina Castro, Dharma Cortes, Carmen Nevarez and Miriam Vega
Respondent: Amy Yaroch, Ph.D., Center for Human Nutrition

Friday, September 24, 2010

8–8:15 a.m.

Welcome Back

Amelie G. Ramirez, Dr.P.H., Director, *Salud America!*

Noon–1:30 p.m.

Lunch and Activity/Exercise Sessions

Activity 1: Salsa Dance Lesson by Laura Rubalcava
Activity 2: Scenic Walk

8:15–9 a.m.

Presentation: “An Overview of the Changing Landscape of U.S. Childhood Obesity Policy & New Resources”

Mildred Thompson, M.S.W., RWJF Center to Reduce Childhood Obesity

1:30–2:30 p.m.

Family Pilot Panel 3: “Policy Changes that Impact Latinos”

Pilots: Alexy Arauz Boudreau, Harris Huberman, Javier Rosado and Myriam Torres
Respondent: Nancy Butte, Ph.D., Baylor College of Medicine

9–9:45 a.m.

Panel: “Looking Ahead: Identifying Funding Opportunities”

Melissa Nelson Laska, Ph.D., Healthy Eating Research
 Charlotte Pratt, Ph.D., National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute

2:30–3:20 p.m.

Community Pilot Panel 1: “Policy Changes that Impact Latinos”

Pilots: Robert Dudley, Norma Olvera and Cristina Barroso
Respondent: Randy Schwartz, M.S.P.H., American Cancer Society

9:45–10:15 a.m. **Break**

10:15–10:45 a.m.

Presentation: “What’s Next for RWJF in Childhood Obesity”

Laura Leviton, Ph.D., Special Advisor for Evaluation, RWJF

10:45–11:30 a.m.

Town Hall: “Pilot Issues and Responsibilities”

Amelie G. Ramirez, Dr.P.H., Director, *Salud America!*

Salud America! Scientific Summit Attendee List



Salud America! Staff

Patricia Chalela
Cliff Despres
Kip Gallion
Kay Haverlah
Amelie G. Ramirez

Frank J. Penedo
Charlotte A. Pratt
Randy Schwartz
Mildred Thompson
Amy Yaroch

Jayne Hannay
Mariah Lafleur
Elizabeth Perez-Ode
Margaret Samuels
Liz Schwarte
Judith Shinogle
Julie Smithwick-Leone
Andrew Spieldenner
Summer Wilmoth

Daniel C. Hughes
Melissa Nelson Laska
Laura Leviton
Dorothy Long-Parma
Cynthia Mojica
Daisy Morales-Campos
Deborah Parra-Medina
Paul Ramirez
Laura Rubalcava
Sandra San Miguel

Salud America! National Advisory Committee

Elva M. Arredondo
Nancy F. Butte
Robert Garcia
Lawrence W. Green
Robin Hamre
Judith Ottoson

Salud America! Pilot Investigators

See Pages 7-9

Salud America! Pilot Co-Investigators

Juan Carlos Acevedo
Yanira Arias
Wanda Gonzalez
Amber Hammons

Attendees

Desiree Acosta
Lesli Biediger-Friedman
Alberto Cordova
Laura Esparza
Vince Fonseca
Sandy Griffith

Erica Sosa
Celia Thompson
Rebecca Vega
Sylvie Whitehead
Alice Yan
Zenong Yin

About the Summit Report

The Summit Report was produced by **Salud America!** Please send comments to despres@uthscsa.edu. Visit *Salud America!* at www.salud-america.org.

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Salud America!

The RWJF Research Network to Prevent
Obesity Among Latino Children

Director: Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez

The Institute for Health Promotion Research

The University of Texas Health Science
Center at San Antonio

(210) 562-6500

<http://IHPR.uthscsa.edu>



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INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH PROMOTION RESEARCH
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