

From the President

October 11, 2018

Dear Friends of Konbit Sante,

I am writing this letter, my third as president, two weeks before I once again head back to Cap-Haitien. My two previous messages have focused on the challenges we face as an organization and the plans we have put in place to address them. My message this year is one of promise and gratitude. I believe we now have the team in place to give Konbit Sante the internal capacity necessary to achieve positive change in the health-care system. While many of our staff members are new to K.S.; the team, both in Haiti and the U.S., has the combination of skills and commitment to effectively move the mission forward. The challenges that I have talked about in the past are still there, but I am confident that we have the right people and plan in place to meet these challenges.

My gratitude is to all the wonderful people in our konbit: volunteers, staff, donors, advisors, family and friends, all working and supporting each other to make a difference in Haiti. I hope that this annual report gives you a glimpse of what is possible with even our modest efforts. Your continued support enables us to continue this important work. Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,



Bob MacKinnon
President, Board of Directors

Konbit Sante

CAP-HAITIEN HEALTH PARTNERSHIP



Strengthening capacity for health in Haiti.

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Letter from the Executive Director

Our 17th year working together in this konbit for health has been full of both challenges and real progress. Through it all, we continue to learn about how to more effectively support positive change in the health systems that serve the poor in Northern Haiti.

Perhaps the most renowned journal on global health, *The Lancet*, recently dedicated a full issue on what has become a growing focus of our work: quality¹. While the World Health Organization has been prioritizing and promoting strategies to expand health-care access in an effort to improve the health of people who live in low-income countries, the *Lancet* study showed that poor quality of health care provided to the people who actually sought care was a bigger contributor to preventable death than lack of access.

As one would expect, the study found that “expanding access to poor quality care is unlikely to improve health outcomes.” We agree with that assessment, and this is why we are committed to the step-by-step, painstaking, long-term work of quality improvement. With this approach, there are no shortcuts, quick solutions, or silver bullets. Quality improvement involves identifying problems or barriers to the provision of good services, using data to better understand the nature and scope of the problems, and identifying sound solutions to address them. Though not simple, we have found these preliminary steps to be relatively easy to accomplish. This is the point at which paid consultants often go home, content that there are good plans in place. It is also the point



at which things most often break down and where the toughest part of our work begins: supporting our partners through the change process to make those good plans a reality. How to accomplish this is such an important and vexing problem that the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) recently awarded Konbit Sante a small grant to study what facilitates the implementation of positive changes in care, and what the elements are that block it. We look forward to sharing the results of the study with you and the global health community in the coming year.

In the meantime, I hope this report gives you a good look at the work that you have made possible with your support, and at the impact that is possible when we tailor our efforts to strengthening the capacity of our partners to provide quality care, not just more care.

Nate Nickerson
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nate Nickerson".

¹ Kruk ME, Gage AD, Joseph NT, Danaei G, García-Saisó S, Salomon JA. Mortality due to low-quality health systems in the universal health coverage era: a systematic analysis of amenable deaths in 137 countries. *The Lancet*. (Published online September 5, 2018.)

Workforce

Health Services

“The approach to achieve these results goes beyond simply equipping and training the staff; it involves accompaniment through the whole change process.”

While a focus on identifying and addressing quality of care issues has led to a 50% decrease in the overall mortality rate for newborns at Justinian Hospital (JUH) over the past several years, preventable deaths have still occurred among babies born moderately premature, and those newborns may have suffered lack of oxygen during the delivery process. This year, after providing neonatal CPAP machines to support the underdeveloped lungs of “preemies” and training on their use, and with the staff fully integrating it into their care, the overall death rate of moderately premature newborns dropped by 55% since last year, further reducing the overall rate of preventable deaths.²

The approach to achieve these results goes beyond simply equipping and training the staff; it involves accompaniment through the whole change process. We have been fortunate to have a very dedicated cadre of volunteer experts who meet monthly with JUH staff to review every case in which a child dies

as well as other challenging cases in which the children survived. This success at JUH has led to the introduction of the same approach at the neonatal unit of Haitian Baptist Convention Hospital, and we hope to be able to share data on the impact there in future reports.

We are using a similar data-driven approach to improve the quality of prenatal care visits at our partner facility in Fort St. Michel. Many women access prenatal clinics in Haiti, but too often, the clinics are of poor quality. We are expanding access to care by paying the customary clinic fees for women who cannot afford them and improving the quality of those visits by paying the health center a small bonus if the visit contains all the 10 essential elements of screening, counseling, birth planning, and follow-up necessary for a prenatal visit to improve birth outcomes. Prenatal screenings are of little use unless there is some follow-up when risk factors are identified, so we have developed systems with the center to connect high-risk women to community health workers to ensure they receive needed care.

In addition, we are providing program support to our partners at ULS to improve nutrition for the first 1,000 days of life—from the start of a woman’s pregnancy through her child’s second birthday—for women and babies in the five poorest villages in the center’s coverage area.

²Statistical analysis (Odds Ratio) shows that the odds of a moderately premature neonate dying in the service has dropped by about 63% (p=.004) over this period.



Photo by: Nicole Wolf

+ Fire Training

In April, we supported the travel of Haitian American firefighter Nathan Lasseur of Broward County, Florida, and paramedic Gayl Nye to conduct an evaluation of fire safety at JUH and train staff in basic fire safety. Their non-profit is called International Firefighters Assistance (www.IFArelief.org). IFA previously conducted a fire safety review at JUH in 2009; since that visit, the most significant change consisted of an electrical system upgrade, which we helped facilitate.

After a walk-through assessment, Lasseur and Nye gave two full days of training, with morning sessions being didactic/discussion and the afternoon practical (setting controlled fires and extinguishing them). Sixty hospital employees—representing every level, from administration to cleaning staff—took part. JUH also agreed to set up a hospital safety committee to devise specific plans of action and responsibilities.



Health Facility Infrastructure

ULS Clinic

Our partners at ULS (United de Lutte pour la Sante, or “Fighting Unit for Health”) have operated a small clinic in the impoverished Cap-Haitien community of Bande du Nord (Fort Bourgeois) since 2010. When the local community donated land for a permanent clinic, we felt they deserved to have a dignified place to receive care, so this year, Konbit Sante raised funds and provided professional expertise for the construction of a new clinic. More than \$200,000 was raised for building construction, clean water supply, and landscape drainage as well as for the continued support of health-care programs, training, and quality improvement initiatives once the clinic opens.

Sometimes clinicians provide high-quality care in spite of their work conditions by finding ways to overcome the barriers and limitations of their workplace environment. That has certainly been the case at ULS, and is one reason it has been a partner of Konbit Sante since 2012. Although Bande du Nord is not far from the urban center of Cap-Haitien, many of its 25,000 residents live on rural mountainsides and lack road access to other medical facilities. ULS represents their only access to preventive, primary, and emergency care, and it provides services whether patients can pay or not—often, the staff has worked

on a volunteer basis when funds were low. The clinic has been serving an estimated 400 clients per month in its small leased space, and will now have the capacity to care for many more.

ULS benefited from the expertise of professional engineers and a medical architect, who all volunteered their time to survey the land and design a simple yet effective facility with room for future expansion. Konbit Sante administrator Dominique Joseph has proven to be an able project manager, as he has successfully navigated many challenges with this undertaking.

The donor response has been inspiring. Matching funds of \$50,000 were procured in the spring, which allowed construction on the clinic to begin in early summer. A September house party/fundraiser in Scarborough, Maine, featuring ULS clinic director Dr. Maudelin Mesadieu helped raise the remaining funds so that the construction could continue uninterrupted. We are incredibly grateful for the many contributions of money, labor, and expertise that made this possible—it was a real konbit!

If things continue to go as scheduled, ULS hopes to have an inauguration ceremony for its new facility in early 2019. We will be sharing information about that as the time nears. Please contact Susan Viets at (207) 347-6733 if you are interested in attending and learning more about Konbit Sante’s work and partnerships in Haiti.



Konbit



Photo by: Nicole Wolf

Creole for a group of people working together to achieve a shared goal.

Research Data & Evaluation

When health facilities want to improve the quality of their services, it is essential that they have the capacity to understand their own situations. The best way to do that is to study it. With the understanding that research can provide, plans can be developed that respond to the true scope and nature of a problem, and progress can be monitored to see if the chosen interventions are having the intended effect. Otherwise, change is guided by impressions, and we have found that impressions are very often inaccurate.

“Participants left energized about doing research and were eager for more instruction on how to apply their new skills...”

This year, we collaborated with friends at the Haiti Medical Education project to hold four two-day seminars on basic research methods at Justinian University Hospital for medical residents and attending physicians. The seminars focused on evolving participants’ concept of research from simply “academic” to the practical, a powerful tool to understand one’s own situation and better equip one to do something about it.

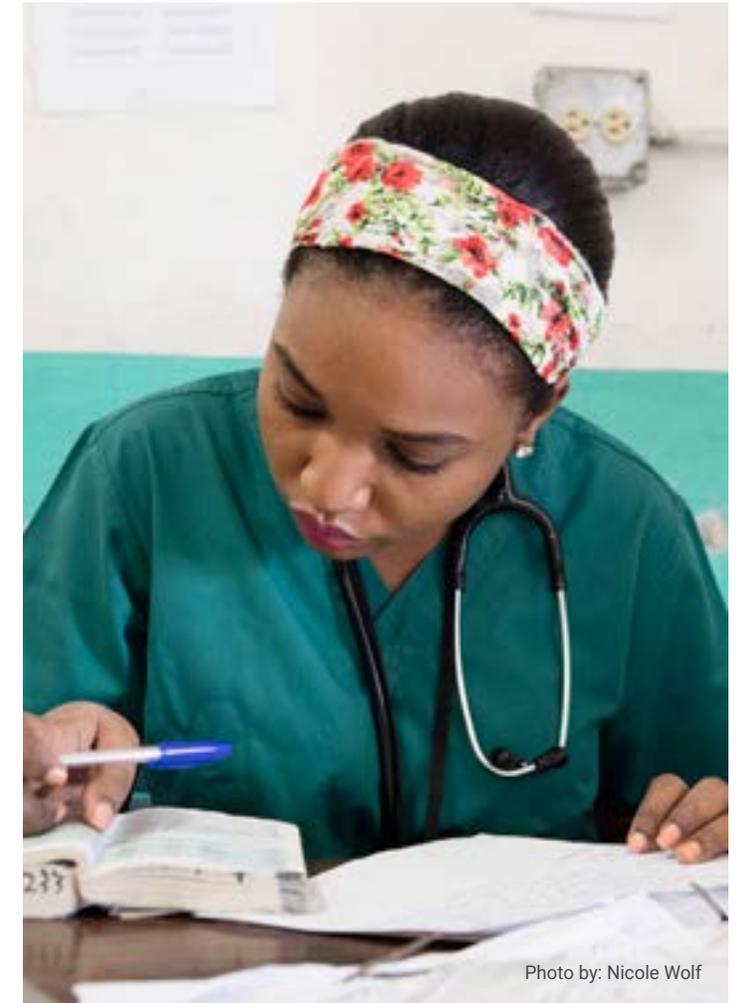


Photo by: Nicole Wolf

Emphasis was placed on beginning with simple studies that potentially have great impact on how care is provided in the hospital. Participants left energized about doing research and were eager for more instruction on how to apply their new skills, so for FY19, we have developed a 10-month course that will accompany and guide residents through a research project focused on improving care within their own service.

Letter from the Program Director

I have been Program Director for Konbit Sante for seven months, and would like to share some of my impressions.

At first glance, Konbit Sante may look like just another small NGO (Non-Governmental Organization), but when I started my work, I was really surprised by the scope of the problems it addresses and the impact it has on the field of health care in Haiti. It is really a unique organization.

I appreciate Konbit Sante's approach to development: It strengthens the capacity of the existing system instead of creating a parallel system. I like working in an environment where everyone supports each other to reach organizational goals and have a positive impact. Konbit Sante is building leaders at different levels of the health system, and provides technical

support to improve the quality of care at the health facilities and communities with which it partners.

I have a lot of experience working for various NGOs, and have worked as an expatriate in Burundi and in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), but my experience with Konbit Sante has been enriching, both in terms of the challenges it addresses and in the relevance and quality of the work it has done and continues to do. I am excited and proud to be playing a leadership role with it.

Thank you for your support, which helps make this work possible. I hope to meet many of you, and look forward to sharing the progress in the coming year.



Adrien Joseph Emmanuel Demes, MD, MPH, PhD(c)
Program Director, Haiti



“I was really surprised by the scope of the problems it addresses and the impact it has on the field of health care in Haiti. It is really a unique organization.”

Meet Volunteer Lynn Desamours

“The first step to overcoming a challenge is believing that you can, even if it takes a dozen reroutes.”



1. Tell us how you became interested in volunteering with Konbit Sante.

I am in my second year of the international health systems MSPH (Master of Science of Public Health) program at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. I became interested in interning at Konbit Sante after I read about their focus on strengthening the health system in Cap-Haitien through partnerships with local health facilities. I found their approach to be unique, and I wanted to learn more about how they work towards this goal firsthand.

2. What draws you specifically to Haiti?

I was born in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and lived in Haiti from the time I was a few months to 3 years old. This

is the first time I've been back to Haiti since then, so just being in the country and experiencing authentic Haitian life has been enlightening. Hearing about Haiti—from family, friends and the media—is one thing, but seeing it with my own eyes is so much better.

3. What are your primary duties working with Konbit Sante? What lessons have you taken away from your work so far?

My primary job duties at Konbit Sante are varied, and include everything from collecting and analyzing data from monthly reports on medicine and supply availability, to reviewing literature on birthing kit evaluations to help develop an improved strategy KS can use. I have learned that health-related issues here are so complex that there really is no “quick

fix”; at least, not a sustainable one. Being here has shown me that an issue doesn't exist in a vacuum, but within a system of factors that complicate it and must be addressed before even beginning to “fix” it. Challenges will appear to discourage any solution you come up with and try to convince you the problems are too big or too complex to do anything about. The first step to overcoming a challenge is believing that you can, even if it takes a dozen reroutes.

4. What's been the most enlightening part of the job thus far?

Interning at Konbit Sante is my first experience working internationally, and has confirmed for me that I want to work in Haiti during my career. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to learn more about international

NGOs through direct experience, especially the aspects that were more “behind the scenes” to me, such as obtaining funding and sustaining partnerships. I have gained a better understanding of the organization's structure, functioning and maintenance, which will help me work more effectively in the NGO setting.

The most enlightening part about the job so far has been learning that being internally driven is vital to the work Konbit Sante is doing, and on a larger scale, to the field of public health. It's been encouraging to see how motivated KS staff and partners are; because of the magnitude of work to be done, they often work really late or come into the office on the weekends, but they do so with good spirits because they believe in what they are doing.

+ Leadership Circle

We have long struggled with the question of how best to strengthen the capacity of our partner facilities to provide quality care. We believe that one central aspect is to strengthen the capacity of leaders and managers, because they are the masonry that hold the building blocks of a functional system together.

There are people in all of our partner facilities who exhibit strong leadership ability and potential, so we are bringing them together to support and learn from one another about how they have been able to make positive change in this challenging context. The meetings are facilitated by our new program director, Dr. Adrien Demes, and he is supported in this role by a committee of volunteers with expertise in management and leadership.

Pictured at right is Dr. Rony Saint Fleur, a pediatrician at JUH.



Photo by: Nicole Wolf

Management

Having good management tools is an important part of effective management. We were pleased to work with student volunteers from Montreal Polytech for a second year, who came for seven weeks to both reinforce and improve the biomedical equipment management software that they introduced last year at Justinian Hospital and to share it with Baptist Convention Hospital. The software helps the biotechnicians keep track of what medical equipment is in service at the hospital. It also tracks what repairs have been made and what repairs need to be done, and provides a standard way to request the parts or technical assistance needed to complete a repair. The software generates reports that we review with the biotechnicians on a monthly basis, and help us identify ways that we can help them be more effective in their jobs and contribute to the quality of care at their facility.



Photo by: Nicole Wolf

Supplies & Equipment

Provision of quality care depends on having the right medicines, supplies, and equipment in the right place at the right time, so we continued our focus on improving that access this year.

Konbit Sante sent two 40-foot containers from our warehouse in Maine full of donated and procured equipment and supplies requested by our four partners. Many volunteers stepped up to help with the warehouse management and inventorying process to make this possible. Among many other things, the containers included neonatal equipment such as incubators, warming tables, and oxygen concentrators for our partners that care for inpatient infants; anesthesia machines; beds and stretchers; and a computer radiography machine from Maine Medical Center, which is able to provide digital images from the old-style x-ray machines, replacing the old hand-development method. Each container was packed with approximately \$150,000 worth of supplies, all of which went to the specific services that requested them. This is in addition to smaller procured items, such as pieces to repair medical equipment, that are regularly taken to Haiti by hand.

As part of our effort to help our partners stretch their limited resources, we coordinated a major purchase of medications from IMRES, a low-cost seller of WHO essential medications in the Netherlands. We are working with Haitian Baptist Convention Hospital to see if this purchasing strategy can help the hospital continue on its path toward maximum self-sufficiency by dramatically decreasing this major expense in its overall budget. Konbit Sante also purchased emergency medications via this route for pediatrics at JUH as part of our neonatal mortality reduction work. These medications complement the donated stock that we help coordinate through partners at Direct Relief International.

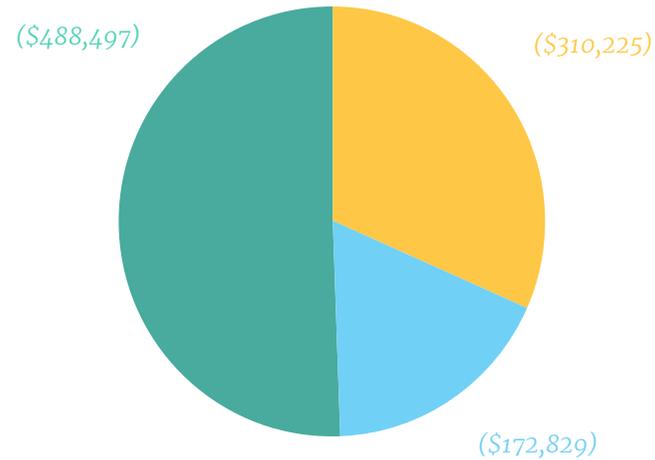
We were happy to reestablish a relationship with Hope International Development Agency of Canada, which sent a container of requested hospital supplies such as syringes, IV supplies, dressing materials, and other basic consumables needed to provide everyday care in hospitals and clinics.

Konbit Sante managed the import of 175 wheelchairs provided by the Walkabout Foundation, which then distributed and fitted them to physically handicapped children in need at HCBH and in the South out of the Haitian governmental office of disabilities. We also managed the import of a Universal Anesthesia Machine donated to the HCBH by friends at Citizens of the World. Both of these shipments faced some significant importation challenges, but Konbit Sante administrator Dominique Joseph is becoming an expert at managing these processes.



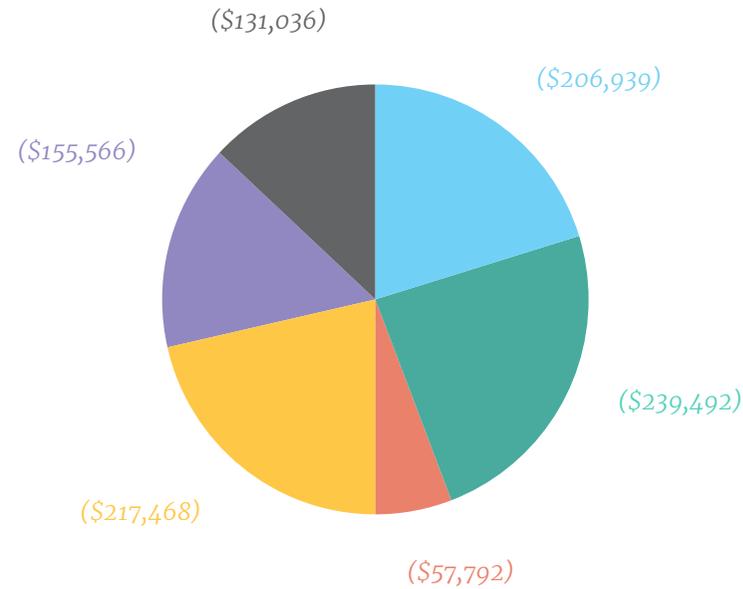
Financial Information

October 1st 2017 – September 30th 2018



Total Income \$971,550

- Foundations and Grants — program **50.3%**
- Donations (includes designated donations) **31.9%**
- In-kind contributions **17.8%**



Total Expense \$1,008,292

- Facility-based Health Programming **20.5%**
- Medical Supply Chain **21.6%**
- Community-based Health Programming **23.8%**
- Health Education, Management & Quality Improvement **5.7%**
- Infrastructure Programming **15.4%**
- Administration **13%**

For full financial information, including independent audits and a full list of donors and supporters, please visit konbitsante.org/financial-information

Donor List • (Our Fiscal Year is October 1st – September 30th)

\$10,000 & over

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 Ekedahl Family Foundation
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 Gipson Family Foundation
 The Haiti Health Trust Inc.
 Daniel Raymond Nickerson Foundation
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 Janice Cohen
 The Community Church
 Deborah Deatrack
 Dr. Eugene Declercq
 Dr. John & Diane Devlin
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Centre Impact

Local volunteers making a difference in the community

Our work at the public Justinian University Hospital (JUH) has been strengthened by a unique group of volunteers of 28 young people enthusiastic to make a positive impact on their community. This group, called “Centre Impact,” is the first local youth-organized group with which Konbit Sante has worked to support the work of the hospital. Centre Impact worked to organize and inventory the central depot at JUH, including entering the inventory into an electronic database. This important work is vital for the health of patients at JUH, as the medical staff needs to know exactly what is available at any given time, and can

“Being part of a huge change in the main hospital of our city is a blessing. We do it because we believe that young people like us should get involved in their community, sharing love, happiness, and hope everywhere.”

Briana Philemy, Centre Impact volunteer

request medicines and supplies accordingly. Working with Centre Impact is in alignment with Konbit Sante’s core value of working alongside Haitians who are committed to serving the people of their communities and making change in the health-care system. We are encouraged that this enthusiastic group will be making a real and positive impact, and look forward to an ongoing partnership.



Photo by: Nicole Wolf

Traveling Volunteers

Eva Lathrop, MD, MPH
Carol Kuhn, MD
Emy Hérissé
Antoine Noreau
Ala-Eddine Kamate
Heloise Gauthier-Pinsonneault
Tracey Proulx, RN
Lisa LeBon, RRT
Adam Silverman, MD
Vic Herson, MD
Shirly Kahana, RN
Nicole Wolf
Nate Lasseur
Gayl Nye
Nancy Sohler, PhD
Meike Schleiff, DrPH
Jeff Musich

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Slate’s, Hallowell
Little Dog Café, Brunswick
J.B. Brown & Sons
Verrill Dana
Northern Data Systems
The Fullertons
Freeport Café

More Information:
konbitsante.org

+ Maine Walks with Haiti

Our 9th annual Maine Walks with Haiti 5K fundraiser on June 10 was greeted by beautiful weather and a great turnout on Portland’s Back Cove. Thank you to all the sponsors and participants who helped make it a success. The 10th annual walk/run will be held on June 8; email info@konbitsante.org to sign up and for more information.



Photo by: Leslie Wagner

Learn more about how you can help.

Information / Donate online
konbitsante.org

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Susan Viets, M.Ed, Asst. Executive Director
Rod Harmon, Communications Coordinator
Richard Williams, MBA, Financial Specialist

Haiti Office:

Adrien Demes, MD, MPH, PhD(c), Program Director
Dominique Joseph, Administrator
Ruddy Emmanuel Adeca, Financial Manager
Josaiame Clotilde St-Jean, RN, Inf. S.C., Community Program Manager
Rony Saint Fleur, MD, Pediatrician

** Konbit Sante also supports the salaries of workers
embedded in the Cap-Haitien health care system.*

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