Approval of Nursing Education Programs

California-RN Board of Nursing
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Why Do BONs Approve Nursing Programs?

- Eligibility to take the NCLEX

- Evidence-based: Improves program outcomes

- Different from national nursing accreditation

Case Study: Florida BON

Qualitative Site Visit Study

State Regulatory Context:

Approval improves standards!

	BONs	National Nursing Accreditors
Authority	Legal authority to close programs not meeting state standards	Authority to remove accreditation
Cost	Less costly – approximately half the states charge nothing	More costly
Federal regulations for funding	BONs do not make programs eligible for federal funding	May be linked to federal funding and related regulations
Fraudulent programs	Positioned to seamlessly work with state agencies for cease-and-desist orders; BONs network through FITS[a] about fraudulent programs that might cross state lines	More difficult to work with state agencies; no national networking system for fraudulent programs
Initial approval/ accreditation	A program must achieve full state approval before enrolling students	Full accreditation is not awarded until the first graduating class
Length of approval/ accreditation	States vary from 1 to 5 or more years, or as needed	8 to 10 years for program visits, unless standards are not met
Mission	Public protection	Ensure quality of nursing programs
Perspective	Statewide – e.g., know availability of faculty, clinical placements, etc.	National – less of a pulse on the regional or state needs
Programmatic	More focus on public protection and state standards: Faculty qualifications less stringent; knowledge of NPA; clinical supervision; standards of practice in some states; faculty/student clinical ratios	More focus on the institution and program excellence; congruence of goals and philosophy; governance; academic policies; continuous quality improvement
Requirement	Integral to licensure - mandated in all states to make students eligible for the NCLEX	Voluntary, although 20 states require it as collaborative oversight
Response to complaints	When complaints are serious (e.g., faculty not showing up to clinical; sudden attrition), BONs can respond immediately	Response takes longer; must go through their procedures
Service	Serves the public	Serves the nursing programs in a business relationship
Structure	State government	Private nonprofit

[a] FITS (Fraudulent Identity Tracking System) is a members-only database through which BONs can communicate about fraudulent or questionable programs that cross state lines, as well as those programs that cross state lines and have their approval status lowered.

Note. ACEN = Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing; BONs = boards of nursing; CCNE = Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education; NLN CNEA = National League for Nursing Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation.

From:
Spector et al.
(2018)

Florida BON

Anecdotal data:

Authority for nursing education programs taken away from BON
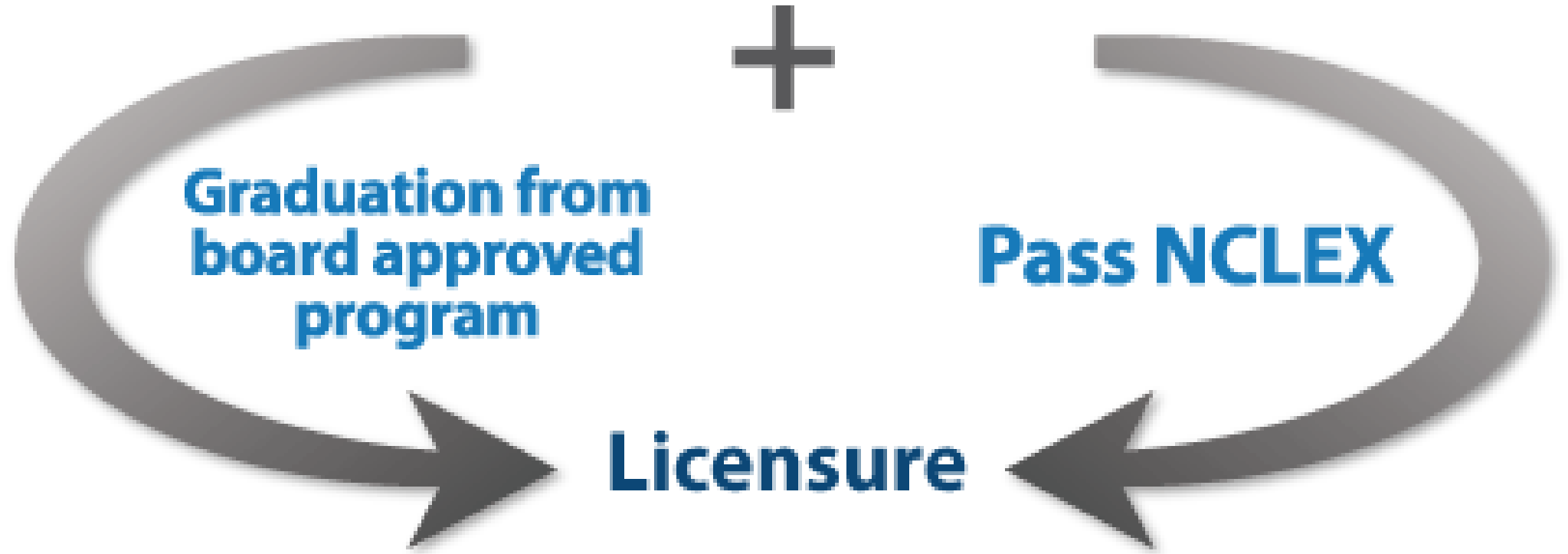
NCLEX pass rate criterion set in statute

Many programs didn't meet it

Programs closed

Authority given back to the BON!

Why Do BONs Approve Nursing Programs?
2 - Pronged Licensure Model

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Graduation from board approved program

Pass NCLEX

Licensure

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Purpose of Approval

To ensure the program comprehensively covers the knowledge and skills that students will need to be licensed as an RN and to practice safely and competently as new graduate nurses.

Spector et al., 2018
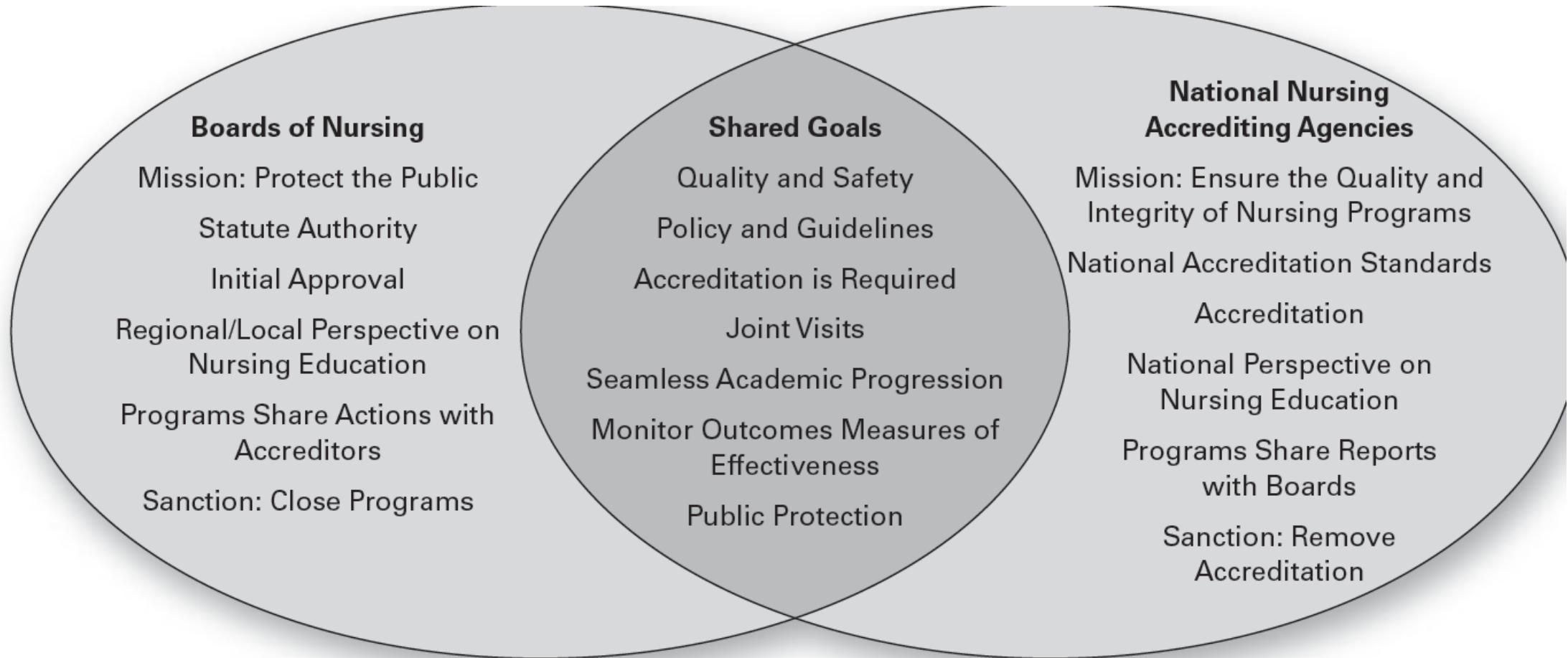
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Do All BONs Approve Nursing Programs?

- Mississippi: approval by the Institutions of Higher Learning *in close collaboration with the BON and with PhD educated nurses.*

- New York by the Regents of New York *with PhD educated nurses.*

- Utah – deems approval to accreditation; however, many in the state are attempting to give authority back to the BON.

History on NCSBN's Work on Approval

Education Committee – 2012 - ongoing

- Collaboration with accreditors, educators and regulators

- World Café with education, regulation and accreditation

- Final recommendations in Model Rules:

  1. Developed a collaborative model for approval.

  2. BONs use accreditation reports for continued approval.

  3. BONs maintain authority over programs and make continuing approval visits only as needed.

  4. BONs make all initial approval visits and decisions.

  5. Annual Reports to the BON

Collaborative Model for Approval

Boards of Nursing

Mission: Protect the Public

Statute Authority

Initial Approval

Regional/Local Perspective on Nursing Education

Programs Share Actions with Accreditors

Sanction: Close Programs

Shared Goals

Quality and Safety

Policy and Guidelines

Accreditation is Required

Joint Visits

Seamless Academic Progression

Monitor Outcomes Measures of Effectiveness

Public Protection

National Nursing Accrediting Agencies

Mission: Ensure the Quality and Integrity of Nursing Programs

National Accreditation Standards

Accreditation

National Perspective on Nursing Education

Programs Share Reports with Boards

Sanction: Remove Accreditation

History Continued...

- Major study on quality indicators of nursing programs - 2020

- Regulatory Guidelines – 2020

- Annual Report Program - Ongoing

Background of NCSBN's Annual Report Program

5-Year Site Visits
Qualitative analysis of 1,278 site visit reports for LPN/LVN and RN programs.

Literature Review
65 published articles reviewed and graded using the Johns Hopkins Levels of Evidence and Quality Guide.

Evidence-Based Approval

5-Year Annual Reports
Retrospective quantitative analysis of 11, 378 annual report data collected from 2012-2017 by 43 NRBs.

Delphi
Consensus from experts in nursing education, regulation and practice.

Background

Results of comprehensive study reviewed by:

- Regulators
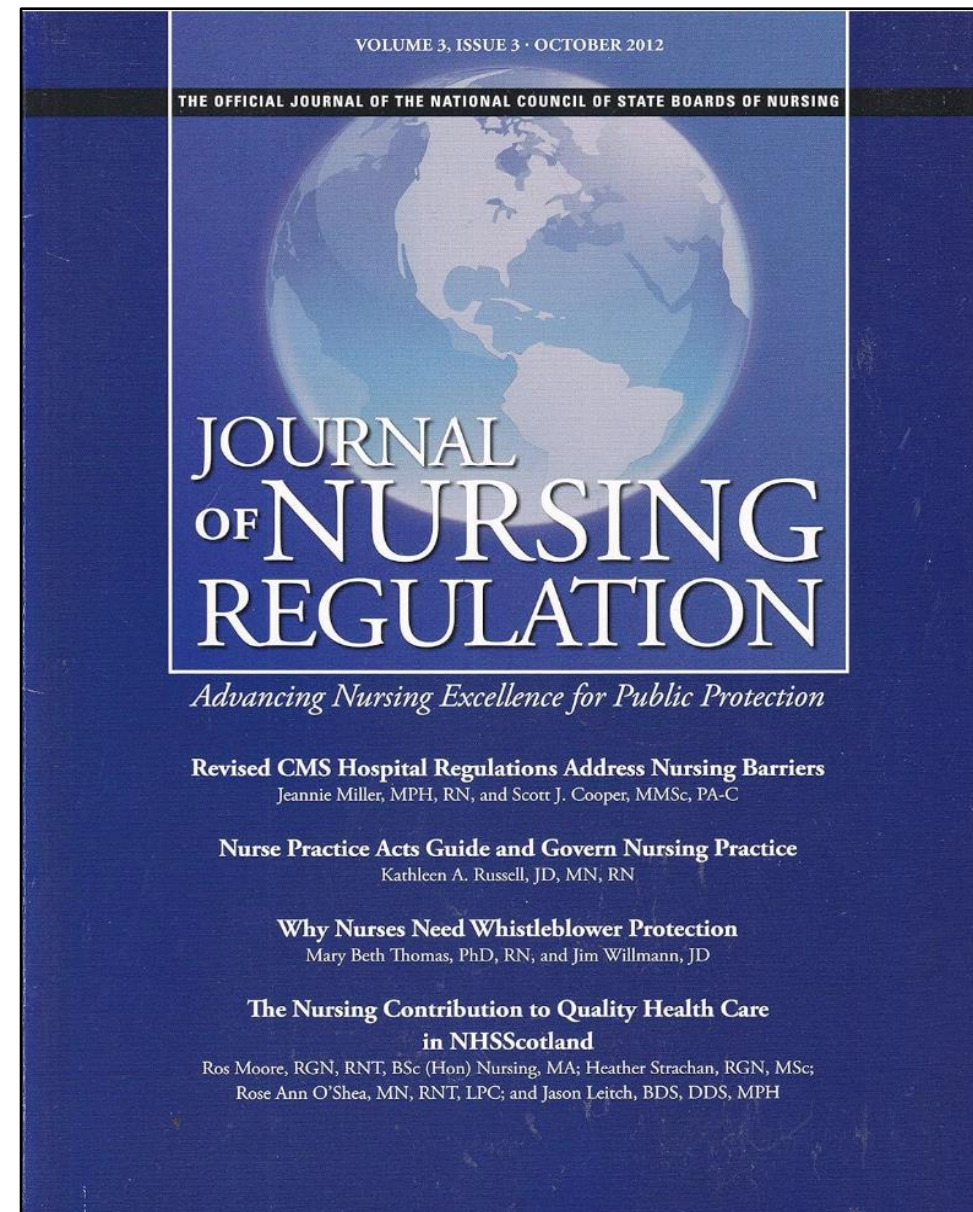
- Educators

- Attorneys

- Researchers

* At least 2 of the 4 national studies must have provided evidence for each Guideline.

Background

July 2020 Summer Supplement

Free at ncsbn.org

Annual Report Program

- From these large, national studies, the first-ever nursing education database was developed.

- Only 50 core questions; BONs can add additional questions.

- 35 BONs are participating, and more are in the planning stages.

- Consistent data being collected.

- Aggregate data are analyzed annually and publicly reported.

- Every 5 years a sophisticated statistical analysis will be conducted.

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Key Quality Indicators

- Accreditation
- Approval status
- NCLEX trends
- Major organizational changes
- Director turnover
- Less than 50% direct patient care in all courses
- Less than 35% full-time faculty
- Less than 70% graduation rates
- Younger than 7 years

Survey

- The BON sends the link.

- Educators have 30 days to complete the survey.

- We remind them at the halfway mark.

Survey

- Any questions about the survey go to NCSBN – contact email in the directions.

- NCSBN may contact programs with questions as they clean and verify the data.

Directions

- Complete for each NCLEX code.
- All questions are required.
- They can go back and make changes until the survey is submitted.
- The responses are automatically saved

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Submitting the Survey

- After last question, they have a summary of their responses.

- They can then download the report before submitting.

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Summary of the 2021-22 Aggregate Results

- More time is needed in clinical experiences (skills labs, simulation and direct care clinical experiences);

- Increased resources needed for non-native, English-speaking students;

- LPN/VN programs should be accredited at a higher level;

- At least 35% of faculty should be full time;

- Graduation rates should increase;

- Higher administrative support of nursing programs should increase; and

- More simulation faculty should become certified and simulation centers should become accredited.

The Impact of the Annual Report Program

Shared With Other Entities

State Workforce Center

Published on website

Employers

Center for Nursing Advancement

Statewide Workforce Publications

Internal office

Education Dashboards on our website

Center for Nursing

AONL

LeadingAge

How Faculty Can Use These Guidelines

- First-ever evidence-based nursing education quality indicators!

- Provides suggestions for quality improvement in programs.

- Offers programs ideas for self-evaluation.

- Guidelines for establishing a new nursing program.

- Establishes credibility for improvements.

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Examples from Faculty

- "Student enrollment, faculty numbers and clinical hours are hot topics in our state."

- "Diversity, dean/director turnover, admissions, retention/attrition..."

- "Enrollment numbers were used to support legislation for grants for nursing students."

- "We provided these data to the state library for legislators to use."

Examples from Faculty

- "We are taking a closer look at part-time and adjunct faculty."

- "Benchmarking, such as for direct patient care hours."

- "Three programs were below the 35% full-time faculty quality indicator. They used these data to request additional faculty."

Examples from BONs

- "Our Board used these data to make decisions for those programs that had pass rates below the state standard for more than 2 years."

- "These data provided essential information as we revise the nursing education regulations."

- "Considering integrating the quality indicators into our regulations."

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Examples from BONs

- "Staff use the data when making site visits."

- "This program fostered closer relationships between us and our programs."

- "These results provided data for our programs to make improvements."

- "Decreased the work of our BON."

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This is a Win-Win Situation

Not only will BONs receive evidence-based annual reports - but they are also a part of the first-ever nursing education database!

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Site Visit Template

- Program data

- Administration

- Program director

- Faculty

- Students

- Curriculum and clinical experiences

- Teaching and learning resources

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How Often?

- All new programs

- Can be regular, like every 3-4 years

- Can be only when needed (e.g., fall in outcomes, complaints, etc.)

* Key is that the BON needs authority over their programs*

Virtual Site Visits?

- Have been very successful.

- Need to have a strict agenda planned.

- Video-cameras to be used throughout.

- Discussions with director, faculty, administration, students, consumers, etc., as with face-to-face surveys. This is imperative!

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Site Visit Evaluations

Essential!

Questions should address:

- Site visit scheduling process.

- Actual site visit.

- Survey report completion process.

- Specifics of virtual site visit, if conducted.

Questions?

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