



HEALTH DISTRICT

999 East Main Street  
Ravenna, Ohio 44266  
330-296-9919  
[www.portagehealth.net](http://www.portagehealth.net)

# 2025 Annual Report

From Data to Action: Public Health in Motion



**PORTAGE COUNTY COMBINED  
GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT**



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## Our Mission

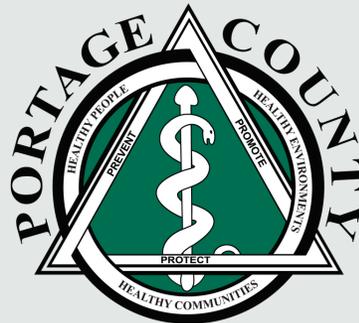
To **promote** public health, **prevent** disease, and **protect** the environment, utilizing leadership and partnership to empower individuals and communities to achieve optimal health.

## Our Vision

Healthy People.  
Healthy Environments.  
Healthy Communities.

## Our Core Values

Accountability  
Dedication  
Innovation  
Communication  
Ethics



HEALTH DISTRICT

## Who We Serve

Serving the **Townships** of:

- Atwater
- Brimfield
- Charlestown
- Deerfield
- Edinburg
- Franklin
- Freedom
- Hiram
- Mantua
- Nelson
- Palmyra
- Paris
- Randolph
- Ravenna
- Rootstown
- Shalersville
- Suffield
- Windham

Serving the **Villages** of:

- Garrettsville
- Hiram
- Mantua
- Mogadore
- Sugar Bush Knolls
- Windham

Serving the **Cities** of:

- Aurora
- Ravenna
- Streetsboro

# Board of Health

## **Board Members:**

Lucy Ribelin, Ravenna City, President

James Bierlair, Vice President

Amy Everett, Member

Charles Delaney, Member

Brock Kertoy, Member

Diana Clark, Member

Dr. Philip Keyser, Aurora City

Linda Grimm, Streetsboro City

*The Board of Health meets on the third Tuesday of each month at the Portage County Health District in the Basement Conference Room.*

## **Board of Health Duties:**

As established by Ohio law, our eight-member Board of Health functions as a policy, governance, advisory, and regulatory board and provides oversight of major financial and programmatic decisions.

The Board of Health provides oversight for the health of the public, the prevention or restriction of disease, and the abatement of nuisances.

The Board of Health members are appointed by elected officials who serve on the District Advisory Council or by the city they represent.

# Health Commissioners Report

It is my honor to present the 2025 Annual Report for the Portage County Combined General Health District. This year's theme, *From Data to Action: Public Health in Motion*, reflects how we translate insight into measurable impact for the residents of Portage County.

In 2025, our work was guided by data, strengthened by partnerships, and grounded in continuous quality improvement. From completing the 2025 Community Health Assessment—where we analyzed local data, engaged residents, and identified priority health needs—to expanding access to food, strengthening harm reduction efforts, enhancing environmental health protections, and supporting families through WIC, health education, and nursing services, our team remained focused on improving population health outcomes.

A focus of 2025 was our agency-wide effort toward national public health reaccreditation. Staff strengthened systems, evaluated performance, and demonstrated how our work transforms data into measurable impact. These efforts led to our successful reaccreditation in February 2026—affirming our commitment to accountability, quality, and evidence-based, community-informed practice.

We continued to innovate—leveraging data visualization tools, strengthening cross-sector collaboration, expanding emergency preparedness capacity, and investing in our workforce. Public health is not static; it is dynamic, adaptive, and rooted in service. Every inspection conducted, vaccine administered, household supported, and partnership formed contributes to a stronger, healthier community.

I extend my sincere gratitude to our dedicated staff, the Board of Health, township and city leaders, community partners, Medical Reserve Corps volunteers, and residents who support and engage in our work. Public health success is built on collaboration.

Together, we will continue turning data into action—and action into lasting impact for Portage County.

Becky Lehman, MPH, MPA, CHES  
Health Commissioner

# A Year in Review

Throughout the past year, the staff of the Portage County Combined General Health District transformed data into meaningful action to improve the health and well-being of Portage County residents. Behind every statistic is a story, and behind every program is a commitment to real people and real community needs.

This annual report highlights how data informed our priorities, guided our programs, and shaped our partnerships—resulting in real impact across Portage County. From prevention and education to environmental and community health, our teams worked across divisions and with community partners to respond to emerging needs and deliver high-quality public health services.

Together, these efforts demonstrate how public health moves from insight to action every day in Portage County.

For a complete overview of our programs and services, please visit our website at [www.portagehealth.net](http://www.portagehealth.net).

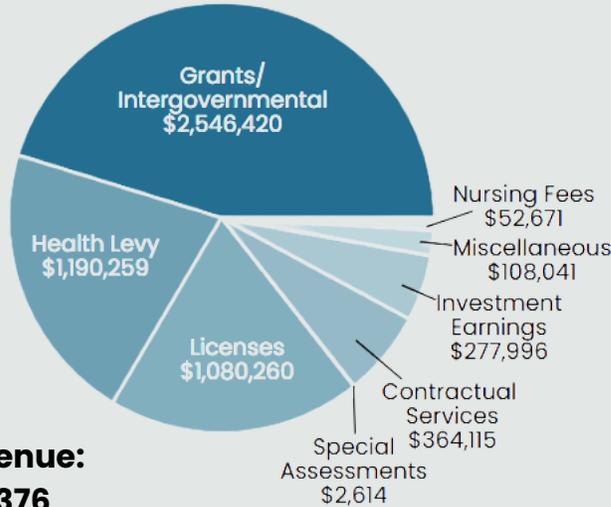
**Real people. Real programs. Real impact.**



# Financials

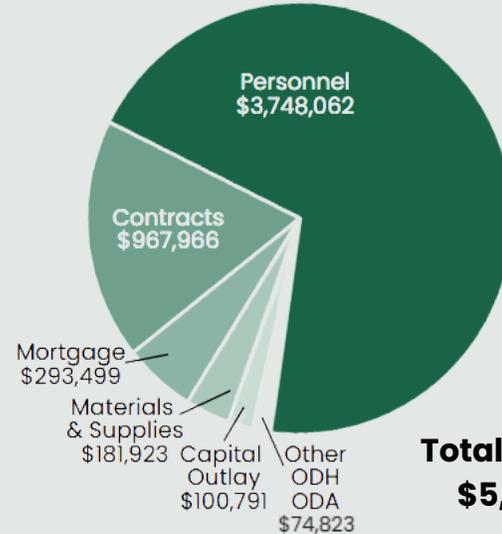
Through strategic financial management, PCHD paid an additional \$196,499 toward the mortgage principal in 2025.

## Revenue



**Total Revenue:**  
**\$5,622,376**

## Expenses



**Total Expenses:**  
**\$5,367,064**

The Finance Division plays a critical role in ensuring the financial sustainability and success of public health programs and services, ultimately contributing to the well-being and health outcomes of the community.

# Administration

## 2025 WORKFORCE

46 Employees:

- 43 full-time
- 3 part-time
- 1 seasonal

18 *Public Health Interns*

Contracts:

2 KSU GIS Students

1 MRC Team Leader

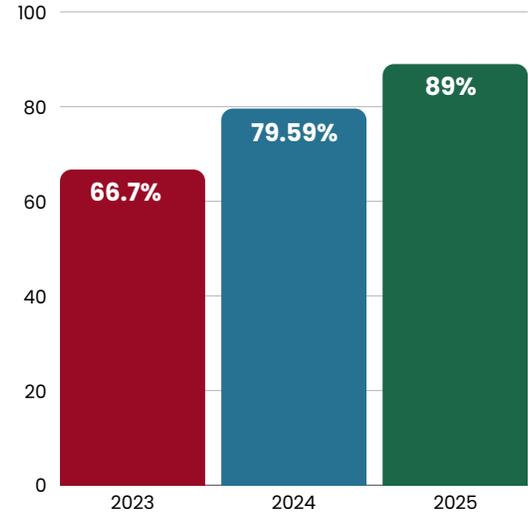
Above contracted staff were paid through grant funds.

1 Medical Director

## STAFF TRAININGS:

- Cultural Competency: How to Work with the Under-Resourced
- Clandestine Drug Training: A Public Health Approach
- Employee Safety
- Emergency Preparedness
- Quality Improvement
- Cybersecurity
- HIPAA
- DiSC Assessment
- Employee Vaccine Program
- Essentials in Leadership (Leadership Team)
- Skillsoft (online trainings available to all staff)

## RETENTION RATE



The Administration Division plays an integral role in the effective management of the health district, encompassing strategic planning, operations oversight, human resource management, and community engagement.

# Addressing Food Insecurity



The Portage County Health District, in partnership with the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank, organizes monthly pop-up food pantries on the first Thursday of each month from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM at the Health District.

The pantry serves as a public health initiative and emergency preparedness exercise, advancing health equity and access to essential resources. Our pop-up pantry is the largest pop-up pantry across eight counties.

The program also provides vital public health services on-site, including vaccinations, WIC support, and community partners, strengthening community resilience and preparedness.



## IMPACT:

- 8,188 People Served
- 2,936 Households Served
- 83,743 Meals Provided
- \$179,737 Retail Value of Food Distributed provided by Akron-Canton Foodbank



**Celebrate Portage Award Nomination**



**14.1%** of Portage County households are food insecure

# Environmental Health

2,458

Food Safety  
Inspections

77

Recreational Camp  
Inspections

24

Tattoo/Body Art  
Inspections

91

School  
Inspections

241

Swimming Pool &  
Spa Inspections

189

Mosquito Site  
Assessment & Trappings

96

Solid Waste Inspections &  
Nuisance Complaints



The Environmental Health Division plays a significant role in safeguarding public health by addressing various environmental factors that impact Portage County residents' well-being; including safe food and water, sanitation, waste disposal, and the promotion of safe and healthy environmental conditions.

# Water Quality Programs

## Home Sewage Treatment Systems

417 Final Inspections  
150 Operation & Maintenance Inspections

## Private Wate Systems

186 Permits Issued  
157 Inspections  
294 Water Samples Taken

## Waste Water Nuisances

76 Inspections/Consults  
135 Data Collection/  
File Review/Reports

## Point-of-sale

212 Inspections

## Plumbing Program

478 Residential Inspections  
172 Commercial Inspections  
10 Clearwater Inspections  
31 Reinspections

## Semi-Public Commercial Wastewater

407 Inspections & Consultations

## Stormwater Program

82 Illicit Discharge &  
Verification Inspections  
236 Dry Weather Screenings  
26 Illicit Discharge Detection  
Elimination Inspect. &  
Surface Water Sampling



In 2025, PCHD was awarded \$150,000 by the Ohio EPA to assist low to moderate income homeowners in repairing or replacing malfunctioning or prohibited household sewage treatment systems through the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) program.

Since 2016, PCHD has successfully secured Ohio EPA WPCLF funds, totaling \$2,100,000 (including \$115,000 in H2O funds) in support for septic system repair and replacement in Portage County. These funds have provided septic system repair and replacement, or connection to existing centralized sanitary sewer systems for 135 households in Portage County.



Explore our YouTube channel at [youtube.com/@PortageCountyHealthDistrict](https://youtube.com/@PortageCountyHealthDistrict) for helpful videos on water quality testing, septic systems, and steps you can take to ensure safe drinking water.

# Advancing Innovation in Environmental Health

## Retail Food Protection Standards Progress

PCHD continues to make strong progress toward meeting all nine FDA Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards. Currently, we meet Standards 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9. In 2026, we will complete a full self-assessment and prepare Standards 7 and 9 for recertification.

A milestone this year was the completion of FDA Standardization by our team lead — an achievement attained by very few local health districts. This credential allows PCHD to internally standardize inspection staff and advance toward full compliance with Standard 2.



## Mapping the Menu: Integration of ArcGIS Applications to the Mobile Food Program

In 2025, PCHD showcased its leadership in environmental health innovation at the National Environmental Health Association Annual Educational Conference, presenting “Mapping the Menu: Integration of ArcGIS Applications to the Mobile Food Program in Portage County”. This work highlights our innovative use of GIS technology to strengthen food safety inspections and improve program efficiency.

PCHD further demonstrated our commitment to modernizing food safety practices through innovative tools and technology by publishing an article with the same title in the PSRC Digest.

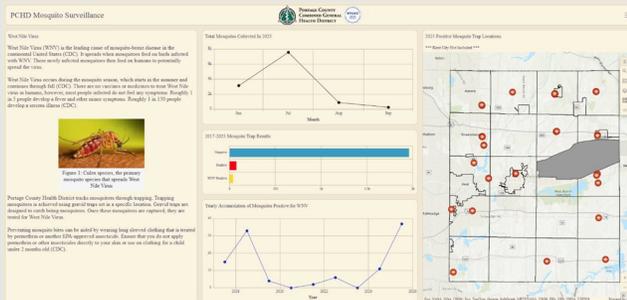
# Data Visualization

## Mosquito Surveillance Dashboard

PCHD launched a public-facing Mosquito Surveillance Dashboard, providing real-time access to mosquito trapping data. The dashboard includes information about West Nile virus, locations of positive traps, and the total number of mosquitoes collected. Residents can also see how many mosquitoes tested positive. Both current-year and past data are available. This tool helps keep residents informed and supports timely public health communication.

## Sewage Treatment System Database Completion

In collaboration with the Portage County Auditor's Office and GIS Office, PCHD completed its comprehensive Sewage Treatment System database in 2025. A Sewage Treatment System Summary Table is now available on the Auditor's website. Residents can view property-specific system information when it applies. This improvement supports the Wastewater Operation and Maintenance Program and makes system information easier for residents to access.



## 2023–2025 CHIP StoryMap Launch

PCHD released the 2023–2025 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) StoryMap, transforming a traditional report into an interactive, visually engaging platform for public use. The StoryMap supports ongoing Community Health Assessment (CHA) and CHIP meetings and reflects strong collaboration with community stakeholders to tell the story of health in Portage County through meaningful data.

## Food Resource Dashboard

PCHD launched a GIS-based Food Resource Dashboard to improve access to food assistance across Portage County. The interactive platform maps farmers markets, WIC and SNAP retailers, food pantries, and hot meal sites in one centralized, user-friendly tool. Residents can search by location, filter services, click for detailed information, and use a built-in locator to find nearby resources. This dashboard strengthens transparency, streamlines access to services, and reflects PCHD's commitment to data-driven solutions that address food access in our community.

# Community Health

The Community Health Division engages in proactive community health promotion and education through the development and delivery of comprehensive outreach programs tailored to the needs of Portage County residents.

Additionally, the Community Health Division is responsible for the the Women, Infants, and Children program, public health nursing, emergency preparedness, and public health accreditation efforts to advance the health and resilience of Portage County residents.



## INJURY PREVENTION

101

Convertible/  
Booster Seats  
Distributed

168

Bike Helmets  
Distributed

27

Cribs For Kids/  
Pack n' Plays  
Distributed

53

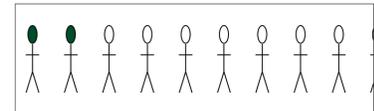
PRC Program  
Milestone  
Classes Held

1,508

Participants in  
SAIL (Stay Active &  
Independent for Life-  
Falls Prevention)

489,411

People Reached with  
Traffic Safety  
Messaging



15.2% of Portage County drivers  
text and drive



# Harm Reduction

Reducing Overdose Fatalities

34  
2024



25  
2025

1,850  
Project DAWN  
(Narcan) Kits  
Distributed

34  
Comprehensive  
Sexuality Education  
Sessions

2,923  
People Reached  
with Project DAWN

15,969  
Safer Sex Items  
Distributed

PCHD continues to prioritize harm reduction strategies that protect health, prevent disease, and strengthen community well-being. Our approach focuses on meeting individuals where they are while providing education, resources, and support.

To expand access and reduce barriers, PCHD installed harm reduction vending machines at the Health District and at UH Portage Emergency Department, offering free, confidential access to naloxone, fentanyl test strips, and other harm reduction supplies.

# Thrive Together Farmers' Market

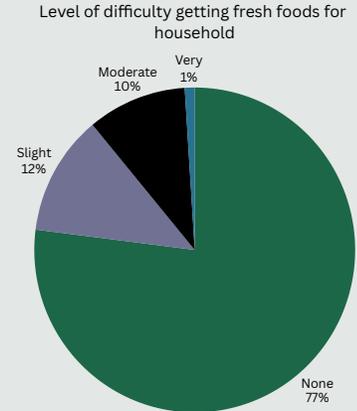


In 2025, the Portage County Health District launched the Thrive Together Farmers' Market, creating a new space for residents to connect, shop locally, and access fresh, healthy foods. As our first year, the market brought together local farmers, community partners, and families in a welcoming, neighborhood setting.

The market offered a wide variety of locally grown fruits and vegetables, healthy food options, and cottage goods, while also providing opportunities for residents to connect with community resources and learn more about healthy living. WIC farmers market coupons, SNAP and senior benefits were accepted, helping to expand access to nutritious food for families and older adults.

In addition to fresh produce and local goods, the Health District offered free Yoga on the Lawn, encouraging community members to move, relax, and spend time together outdoors.

The Thrive Together Farmers' Market reflects our commitment to building healthy, connected communities and expanding opportunities for residents to come together and thrive.



# Women, Infants, & Children

The Women, Infants, & Children (WIC) program, funded by an Ohio Department of Health grant, offers nutrition education and supplemental foods to women, infants, and children. It provides access to nutritious foods, breastfeeding support, and educational resources while connecting families to additional local services.

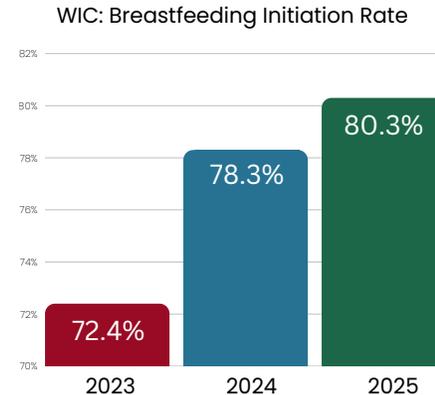
WIC is available to income-eligible pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, as well as infants and children up to age 5.

PCHD administers WIC services in Ravenna and Columbiana Counties.



1,941  
Average Monthly  
Caseload

5,437  
Contacts for  
Breastfeeding  
Education & Support



**Portage County WIC is a milk drop site for pre-screened donated human milk.**

**Donated milk is distributed to the most vulnerable infants in Ohio and across the country.**

**In 2025, PCHD proudly collected 11,392 oz of donor milk for the Mothers' Milk Bank of Ohio!**

# Nursing Programs

## Top 10 Communicable Diseases

Illnesses	Cases
COVID-19	737
Chlamydia	232
Influenza Hospitalization	228
Gonorrhea	57
CPO	39
Chronic Hepatitis C	35
Lyme Disease	32
Campylobacteriosis	24
Streptococcus pneumoniae <i>antibiotic resistant</i>	15
Salmonellosis	14



**1,697**  
Communicable  
Disease  
Investigations

**1,014**  
Child &  
Adult  
Immunizations

**350**  
Flu & COVID-19 Shots  
and  
29 Community Clinics

**220**  
Complex  
Medical  
Help Clients

**166**  
Animal Bites/  
Rabies  
Exposures

Public Health Nurses serve as advocates and educators working collaboratively with individuals, families, communities, and healthcare providers to protect and promote the health of the residents of Portage County. Their commitment to population-based services, enabling services, and education plays a part in improving health outcomes and enhancing the quality of life for the community.

# Emergency Preparedness & Medical Reserve Corps

Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) is a grant-funded program that strengthens community readiness and resilience to public health emergencies by building strong systems, partnerships, and coordinated response efforts. PCHD also manages the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), a dedicated group of medical and nonmedical volunteers who support public health and emergency response activities during emergencies and community events.

PCHD provides training programs, which include courses on American Heart Association CPR, Bloodborne Pathogens, and Psychological First Aid.

**40**

Trainings/Classes  
Provided

**293**

People Trained



**477**

MRC Volunteer Hours  
at Pop-up Food Pantry

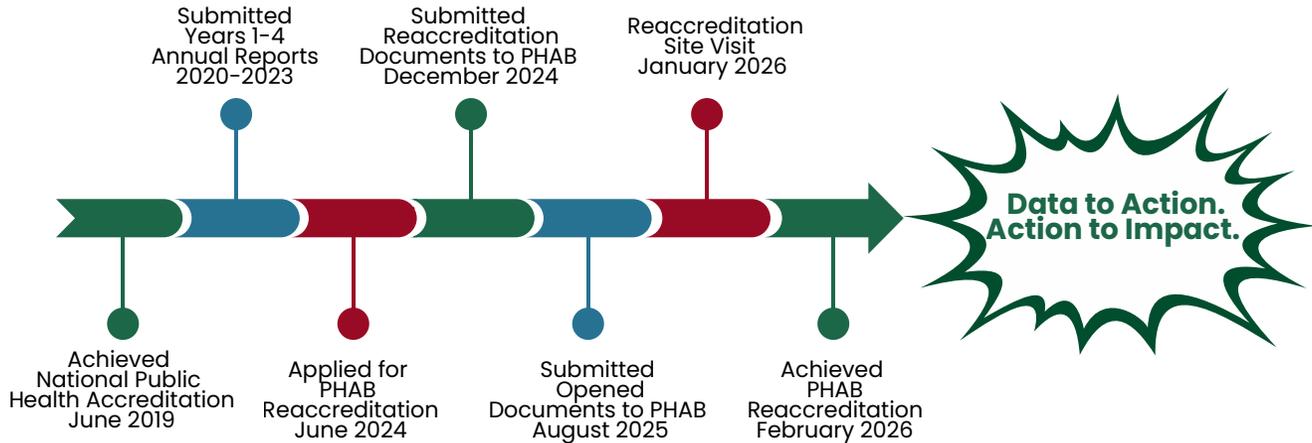
# Community Health Assessment & Improvement Plan

In 2025, PCHD took a close look at the health of our community through our Community Health Assessment (CHA). We collected and reviewed local data, listened to residents, and worked with community partners to better understand the health challenges and strengths across Portage County.

Based on what we learned, we identified key priority areas to focus on in the next three years in our Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). These priorities reflect the issues that matter most to our community and where we can make the greatest impact together.

Chronic Disease	Mental Health & Substance Misuse	Population Health & Safety	Cross Cutting Factors
<p><b>Areas of Focus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cancer Mortality</li><li>• Cardiovascular Disease</li><li>• Nutrition &amp; Physical Activity</li></ul>	<p><b>Areas of Focus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Youth Depression &amp; Suicide Ideation</li><li>• Adult Depression Rates</li><li>• Adult Anxiety</li><li>• Adult Binge Drinking</li><li>• Adult Substance Misuse</li></ul>	<p><b>Areas of Focus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Food Insecurity</li><li>• Unintentional Injury</li><li>• Communicable Disease</li><li>• Maternal &amp; Infant Health</li></ul>	<p><b>Areas of Focus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Equitable Access &amp; Sustainability of Community Resources<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Transportation</li><li>◦ Housing</li><li>◦ Healthy Foods</li><li>◦ Specialized Care Providers</li><li>◦ Insurance Access</li></ul></li></ul>

# Public Health Accreditation



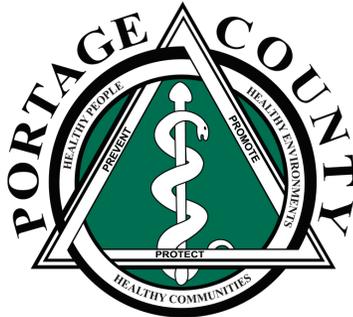
Being an accredited health district means we meet national standards for quality and accountability. It shows our community that we use data to guide decisions, work closely with partners, and measure whether our efforts are making a difference.

Accreditation requires us to regularly assess community health needs, set priorities, create action plans, and track our progress. It keeps us focused, transparent, and committed to continuous quality improvement.

Our reaccreditation in 2026 reflects the dedication of our staff and the strength of our community partnerships. From data to action, we remain in motion – working every day to build a healthier Portage County.



# Awarded National Accreditation for Public Health Excellence!



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