



Carly Warren has been a full-time Family Nurse Practitioner at Perkins Primary Care since April 2016.

Carly Warren thought she was on a career path that would lead her to become a funeral home director.

story by Van Mitchell, Contributing Writer

Those plans changed, when she decided that the medical field was her true calling. She has been a full-time Family Nurse Practitioner at Perkins Primary Care since April 2016.

"All through high school I worked for a family-owned funeral home in Perry," Warren said. "I (also) worked there my first two years of college, and I fell in love with the funeral business. I loved working with families. I actually thought about going to school to be a funeral director before deciding (on medicine)."

Warren received her Bachelors of Science in Nursing from University of Oklahoma 2003 and her Masters of Science in Nursing from University of Colorado 2010. Prior to operating her own clinic, she worked in the Labor and Delivery and Emergency Departments at Norman Regional for six years, worked as clinical nurse educator and Emergency Department Manager at Perry Memorial Hospital for four years, was a

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Mercy Oklahoma City Named a Newsweek Best Maternity Hospital



Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City has again earned a spot on the list of best hospitals in the country to deliver a baby.

Mercy Oklahoma City is one of only 350 hospitals on the list of America's Best Maternity Hospitals determined by Newsweek and data firm Statista. The designation places Mercy among the highest echelon of more than 2,700 hospitals across the country offering maternity services.

The survey includes two performance categories: five-ribbon hospitals and four-ribbon hospitals. Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City is the only hospital in the state of Oklahoma to receive the highest award, a five-ribbon designation.

"This recognition as a best maternity hospital reflects our team's dedication to patient safety and creating the best experience for our patients and their families," said Dr. Chad Smith, Mercy OB-GYN and chief medical officer. "The kind of care they provide is known in our community and people want to have their baby at Mercy, creating exponential growth at Mercy Birthplace."

The hospital's labor and delivery and postpartum services have been at capacity for years. Construction on the Love Family Women's Center on the campus of Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City kicked off in summer 2022. The 175,000-square-foot, four-story facility, expected to open in fall 2023, will serve women and children. When construction is complete, the facility will have a total of 73 patient rooms,

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CALLING

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nurse practitioner at Community Medical Clinic for three years and worked as Hospitalist at Hillcrest Medical Center in Cushing for two years.

Waren was raised in the Stillwater/Perry area. She and her husband, Rocky, who works as the operations manager at NGL Energy Partners in Cushing, have 3 children.

Waren said while living in Perry, her husband commuted to work in Cushing. She said the family needed to move closer to his job.

"He really needed to be closer, and we knew we didn't want to be in Cushing, because we wanted something a little smaller," she said. "We really liked Perkins, and that is where we ended up. We love this community that we live in. It is a great community."

Waren said Stillwater Medical Center was interested in opening a clinic in Perkins, and approached her about operating it.

"We really saw a need," she

said. "Everybody was driving to Stillwater or Cushing to have their primary care needs. I was approached by Stillwater (Medical Center), and they were interested in opening a clinic here in Perkins."

Waren said the Perkins clinic has been growing.

"It has been building, and going strong ever since," she said. "We see anywhere from 20 to 30 patients a day. We love it here. It is a great community to be in."

Waren said being a Family Nurse Practitioner allows her to be a patient's primary care provider.

"I can essentially do most tasks that a physician can do (in a clinic setting), but in the state of Oklahoma we have to have a supervising physician to be able to write prescriptions," she said. "I have the same ability to diagnose and treat that a family practice doctor does."

Waren said the number of Nurse Practitioners in Oklahoma has risen since she began her career.

"When I started 12 or 13 years ago, there weren't enough Nurse Practitioners around for me to do my clinical rotations with," she said.

"I did all my around physicians."

Waren said Nurse Practitioners are helping fill a gap, especially in the rural areas.

"There is a severe shortage of family practice doctors," she said. "A lot of medical students are wanting to specialize in a certain field, and it has left a huge gap in family physicians. In a lot of ways, there is a need, and that is where we have come in and filled a void. There is a need there for those patients to be treated. I think it is important to have access to care. You have a lot of patients that don't have the means to drive 20 miles away. We have some patients that walk here, or ride their bike here. It is important that they have someone here local that they know and get taken care of."

Waren said the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the nursing field.

"I think there has been a large number of nurses with burnout," she said. "With COVID-19, especially, it has been a really difficult two years here in Oklahoma."

She added COVID also impacted how her clinic operated.

"It definitely impacted our clinic," she said. "We tried really hard from the beginning to wade through this, and do the best for our patients. We figured a way to make it work. We have done more tele-medicine than we have ever done at our clinic."

Waren enjoys spending time with her family, and also unwinds by cooking.

"I love to cook," she said. "I have always said that if I did anything else, that would be it."

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MERCY
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increasing Mercy's award-winning labor and delivery capacity by 40%.
Newsweek's ratings are based on three factors: a national survey of hospital managers and maternity care specialists, a review of key hospital performance data related to maternity care, including newborn screening and a hospital's rate of cesarean births, and review of patient satisfaction data related to the communication and responsiveness of staff.
Mercy Hospital Jefferson in Missouri was the only other hospital in Mercy's four-state region to be named a five-ribbon hospital on the Newsweek list. Mercy Hospital St. Louis, Mercy Hospital Springfield and Mercy Hospital Ada were recognized on the four-ribbon list. The complete America's Best Maternity Hospitals 2022 List can be found at <https://www.newsweek.com/rankings/americas-best-maternity-hospitals-2022>.



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CAREERS IN NURSING

DELIVERANCE OF CARE : BEST PRACTICES ARE ESSENTIAL

by James Coburn - staff writer

You could say that love brought Jane Kirby to become a nurse — love and being a mom.

She knows a lot about the diversity of best practices as a registered nurse serving SSM Health's Quality and Process Improvement division. She covers the state of Oklahoma as clinical educator for the medical group.

Kirby advocates not only for patients, but also the medical staff. Best practices mean healthier lives.

"I feel as an educator that it is so important because in my classes I make sure the staff understands the reason why," Kirby said.

If they understand reasons why best practices work, staff becomes more confident with improved outcomes.

Kirby's role in reviewing best practices and risk management helps to ensure that SSM gives the best and safest quality of care for its

patients.

"I will go in and look at clinics and help managers and staff follow the correct workflow, and follow best practice standards," said Kirby, who has been with SSM for two years.

She is the first person in the medical group to serve in her position. Kirby joined with SSM shortly before COVID-19 began its spread through Oklahoma and had never seen anything like it.

"It was a blessing that I could meet people, see what's going on and start implementing processes," she said.

Her professional background prepared her for nursing. Kirby became a registered nurse in 1996 after earning her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at the University of Central Oklahoma. She had a career in radio, TV, journalism and communications, mostly in

management before life sent her on a different path. Kirby's first nursing experience was serving in high-risk labor and delivery at OU Medical Center.

"That was wonderful. I loved working with residents. I delivered or assisted delivering many babies and worked with parents and family members. That was probably where my first love of educating started right then and there," she said.

Kirby worked in ambulatory care before leaving OU Medical Center to working as a nurse auditor for a state agency. Additionally, she worked for a private company providing ambulatory care. All of this led her back to quality process improvement through education — her heart and soul of nursing. Several staff members started as medical assistants before entering nursing school, graduated and continue to work for SSM Health as

nurses.

"I've gained experience in so many areas that I use that experience to help the clinical staff and nurses to get where they want to be," Kirby explained. "I am just thrilled to have any part of that."

Nurses have played a vital, yet difficult role in health care during the past few years. Today's world calls for strong mentors and teachers, she said. Nurses must think outside the box to keep a grip on the nursing shortage across the country. God gives SSM Health the ability to serve, Kirby continued.

SSM's mission statement resonates throughout the core of SSM Health. "Through our exceptional health care services, we reveal the healing presence of God," is central to staff all the way up to the medical group president, she said.

"When I came to SSM, I was so

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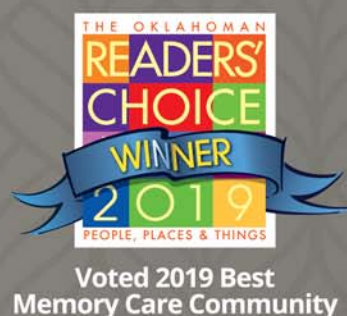


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KIRBY

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pleasantly surprised that they truly believe it, and work for it every day," Kirby said.

Many providers have joined SSM Health. The medical group continues to grow while many providers have joined SSM Health. SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital – Midwest was purchased in April of 2021 along with those Midwest City clinics. Kirby will provide specialized training within specialty clinics or even a family practice clinic. Once a week she does specialized training for clinical staff wherever she is needed.

"It's very important for retention because there are so many choices for nurses and other clinical staff, that we need to let them understand that we're glad they're here — that we want them to be here. But we will safeguard their practice and train them well," she said.

'THAT'S WHY I'M A NURSE'

Kirby is a busy woman who lives life to the fullest. In August she will celebrate her 40th wedding anniversary. She has two children who are the joy and sunshine of

her life.

Her son will be 36 in December and is the reason why Kirby is a nurse, she said. Her 30-year-old daughter lives and works as a choreographer at in Orlando, Fla.

Her son lives in Edmond with a 24/7 staff assisting him with living a developmentally delayed life, Kirby said.

"I spent probably the first seven years of his life in several hospitals here in Oklahoma and California," she said. "He's had two brain surgeries, and so that gave me my drive to be a nurse."

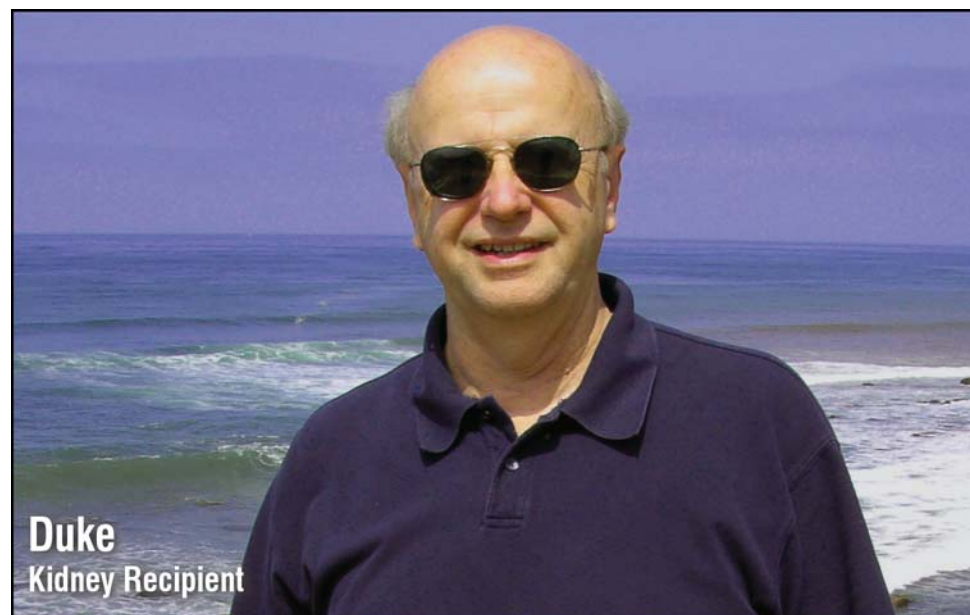
One of her fondest memories is of taking her son in a stroller as a baby to an OU Health Sciences Center medical school library. She took advantage of reading books to try learning the best treatment for her son.

She would go to his specialists in California who readily noticed she already understood a lot about their best practices. They would ask her if she was a nurse.

"No, I'm a mom," she replied. "But I had to educate myself, because I had to find the best way to ensure that we were doing the best thing for him. That's why I'm a nurse."



The healing presence of God is at the core of Jane Kirby's nursing career as a registered nurse serving SSM Health's Quality and Process Improvement division. She covers the state of Oklahoma as clinical educator for the medical group.



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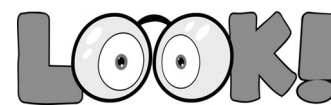
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Pafford Medical Services Names Chrissy McDaniel as Deputy Director of Operations

Pafford Medical Services promoted Operations Manager, Chrissy McDaniel, Paramedic to the position of Deputy Director of Operations for the company's Central/Western Oklahoma Operations in April of 2022. McDaniel, a paramedic since 2007, is a very personable and thoughtful healthcare executive having 15 years of EMS, ambulatory care and hospital experience as a caregiver, supervisor, operations manager and safety specialist. As such, McDaniel, is a data-driven policy advocate. At Pafford, she is also focused on fostering and maintaining an inviting and fulfilling ambulance operations workplace. She will continue to play an instrumental role in streamlining personnel recruitment and the hiring process. She will also assist with on-boarding new employees in Central and Western Oklahoma. McDaniel offers all the company's team members an "open door" communications and support system and will continue to assist with the company's community outreach and customer service throughout the service area.

Pafford's Central and Western Oklahoma service comprises of both urban and rural communities. The area extends east to west from Del City to Hinton and Geary and from Piedmont to Mustang and Union City on the north/south borders. Pafford currently operates 17 ambulances in the service area which is populated by more than 200,000 persons.

Prior to her work with Pafford Medical Services, McDaniel, served with Samaritan EMS as its clinical coordinator and field operations supervisor in 2017. She also formerly served INTEGRIS Medical Group as a clinic paramedic and safety specialist. She began her career in 2007 as a paramedic with EMSA in Oklahoma City.

Chrissy McDaniel is wife to her husband, Cody, who is also a first responder. They are parents to Cooper, 11, and Colbie, 8. They both enjoy spending time at Cooper's baseball games; in the horse barn at Colbie's horse shows; or making memories on family travel adventures.



Operations Manager, Chrissy McDaniel, Paramedic has been promoted to Deputy Director of Operations.



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A photograph of three healthcare professionals, two women and one man, wearing teal scrubs. They are standing in a clinical setting, with the woman in the foreground slightly out of focus, looking towards the camera. The man and another woman are in the background, also looking towards the camera.

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UCO prepares tomorrow's leaders



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Both are cornerstones of advancing your nursing career through the University of Central Oklahoma's graduate programs.

Leann Laubach, Ph.D., is an assistant professor and the baccalaureate program coordinator in the Department of Nursing at the University of Central Oklahoma.

She has been teaching at UCO since 2005 and has 22 years of experience as a nurse in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

"They set their own goals so it's a more personalized experience. It's not the goals I set for you as the instructor," Laubach said of the program's online offerings. "They are related to your ultimate goal for your degree. I think that's really where we pride ourselves both in our RN to BSN and our master's program is the personalization of the degree and maintaining that close contact with our students so we can help you be successful in our programs."

The master's degree directly addresses the University of Central Oklahoma's mission to contribute to the intellectual, cultural, economic, and social advancement of the communities and individuals it serves.

The inclusion of 100 practicum hours facilitates the participation of students in transformative educational experiences that directly benefit the Oklahoma City metro community.

Nursing graduate students can choose from two-course pathways: nursing leadership or nursing education. A master's degree in nursing education will prepare students for academic positions in nursing education or positions in clinical staff education. The leadership pathway allows students to meet individual goals in areas such as health care leadership or administration.



A UCO nursing degree opens up a myriad of possibilities.

The program is offered at a \$15,000 flat fee, even if a student is out of state.

"It's protecting students against inflation," Laubach said.

Laubach noted the flexibility of the program benefits students in ways that make it possible to advance their degrees.

"There's great value in that for someone who maybe is working full time and or has a family, they can carve those hours out in a time frame that works for them. I see that as very valuable for both programs. It makes it so students can do the work when they need to do the work and not at a time that works better for me."

The recent pandemic has created a divide for many nurses who enjoy their chosen careers but may feel burnt out in their current roles.

"I think now has challenged people to think outside of being at the bedside that whole time," Laubach said. "I think they are seeking education because they want that change. I think that's the future of where nursing is going that nurses are realizing they want to stay in nursing but they don't know if they want to stay at the bedside the whole time."

There is a definite opportunity for nurses to use their experiences to better the next generation of nursing through education or mentorship.

"I think for nurses who find they are passionate about teaching new nurses it's an advantage to come back and get an education or leadership degree," Laubach said. "A leadership degree would allow students to be the clinical leaders, the charge nurse and give them the skillset they need to be successful."

"The advantage of coming back to get your master's degree or even your bachelor's degree is expanding the way you think. The biggest thing is the growth mindset that occurs from the next degree to the next degree."

The first nursing class from the nursing department at the University of Central Oklahoma graduated in 1972. Since that time, more than 3,500 well-qualified graduate nurses have entered the workforce.

Graduates of this program are known for being some of the best nurses in the state of Oklahoma.

For more information visit: <https://www.uco.edu/cms/academics/nursing/>

Cancer Center Launches Historic Trial for Cancer Drug Developed in Oklahoma

OU Health Stephenson Cancer Center has announced a historic first for the campus and the state: A new cancer drug, called OK-1, which was conceived and created by an OU College of Medicine researcher and developed entirely in Oklahoma, without the support of a pharmaceutical company, is being tested in humans for the first time in a Phase 1 clinical trial.

The drug was created by researcher Doris Benbrook, Ph.D., whose work on the compound began more than 25 years ago. New drugs developed within an academic institution, without the aid of a pharmaceutical company, are exceedingly rare. The Food and Drug Administration approved the drug to be given to humans in the clinical trial, which is underway at Stephenson Cancer Center. The drug is initially being given to women with advanced-stage ovarian, endometrial and cervical cancer.

"It is very exciting to reach the point where we can test OK-1 in a clinical trial," said Benbrook, who is a professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the OU College of Medicine. "This drug is not available anywhere else in the world right now. We believe it has tremendous potential for treating cancer without causing toxic side effects."

OK-1 is derived from the natural compound vitamin A. The human body uses vitamin A to make retinoic acid, a nutrient that supports healthy functioning. Some forms of retinoic acid, as well as synthetic versions called retinoids, have been used to treat cancers such as leukemia. However, both are highly toxic, Benbrook said, and patients often become resistant to their effectiveness. Her aim was to

create a better version of the drug that is able to kill cancer cells but is less toxic to normal cells.

That effort has taken over two decades of experimentation. Benbrook worked with a collaborator to modify the drug's chemical structure and test the biological activity of new versions. The new drug they ultimately developed has been modified to such an extent that it works in a completely different way than vitamin A. Collaborators in the OU College of Pharmacy performed research that was necessary to test OK-1 in clinical trials. The work has been supported by millions of dollars in grants from the National Cancer Institute.

OK-1 works by taking away one of the "tricks" that cancer cells use to survive. When cancer cells develop, the body naturally tries to stop their invasion and growth. In response, cancer cells increase their production of "chaperone proteins," which act like "bodyguards" to keep the cancer cells from dying. The drug OK-1 is able to attach to the chaperone proteins, disabling them in the process. The body's immune system, or another drug like chemotherapy, is then better able to kill cancer cells because they are no longer protected by "bodyguards." The drug does not harm healthy cells because they do not need the chaperone protection.

Phase 1 clinical trials are conducted to determine the highest dose of a new drug that can be given safely without causing severe side effects. While OK-1 has been tested extensively in the laboratory and in animal research models, the true effect can't be known until it is given to humans. However, preclinical studies of the drug have proved that it is effective without causing severe side effects or birth



Dena Newlun, OU Health Stephenson Cancer Center patient and her therapy dog, Tripod Petey.

defects, Benbrook said. The drug is being given to humans in capsule form.

Kathleen Moore, M.D., Associate Director of Clinical Research and Director of the Oklahoma TSET Phase 1 Program at Stephenson Cancer Center, is leading the clinical trial. "The Phase 1 investigators are so excited to finally have this novel drug available to our patients," Moore said. "It is a completely new class of drug, which, in addition to having efficacy in and of itself, may help other current cancer therapies work better without adding toxicity. This is kind of the holy grail. We have many combinations that work better than the single drug, but the combinations are far too toxic for general population use. OK-1 gives us the opportunity to bring combinations into trials that may work better without compromising safety. The potential is so exciting."

At the conclusion of the Phase 1 trial, Moore and her team will have learned the optimal dose of OK-1. In subsequent trials, they plan to test the drug in combination with other cancer drugs already on the market. Benbrook has made patent applications

on several drug combinations; OK-1 appears to be most effective when given with other existing drugs.

"We found in our experimental models that when we add OK-1 to other cancer therapies like paclitaxel, which is the standard chemotherapy for endometrial cancer, we get a synergistic effect that is much better than either drug alone," Benbrook said.

Benbrook's preclinical research also has shown that OK-1 may be effective for preventing cancer. She plans to test OK-1 in an ovarian cancer prevention trial in the Cancer Prevention Clinical Trials Network, a program of the National Cancer Institute. The drug will be given to women who are going to have their fallopian tubes surgically removed. Because most ovarian cancers originate in the fallopian tubes, researchers will examine the effect of the drug on fallopian tube tissues. Ultimately, the drug could be given to women who are genetically predisposed to cancer, such as those with a BRCA gene mutation.

The Oklahoma TSET Phase 1 Program at Stephenson Cancer Center

DRUG

Continued from Page 12

is the only such program in the state and is considered among the top 10 programs in the nation. As a National Cancer Institute-designated cancer center, Stephenson can offer patients first access to early-stage drugs like Benbrook’s OK-1.

“This is a very exciting time to be conducting the first Phase 1 trial for a drug developed on our campus,” said Robert Mannel, M.D., director of Stephenson Cancer Center. “It is only

possible because of Dr. Benbrook’s passion and determination and the ability of Stephenson Cancer Center to offer Phase 1 clinical trials. We have a very special team of doctors, nurses, researchers and staff who work together to safely give these new drugs to humans.”

In addition to funding from the National Cancer Institute, Benbrook’s research has been supported by grants from Oklahoma City-based Presbyterian Health Foundation, as well as the OU College of Medicine Alumni Association.



At podium in blue suit: Doris Benbrook, Ph.D., OU College of Medicine researcher who developed new cancer drug OK-1.

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Situation Update: COVID-19

New Cases 7 Day Average	544
New Cases Week of 6/5/22 - 6/11/22	3,810
Active Cases	7,438
Total Cases	1,059,864
CDC/NCHS Provisional Deaths (As of 6/3/22)	16,145
Acute Care OSDH Licensed Facilities/Location**	Recent 3 day Ave. Hospitalizations
	Cases (ICU)
Region 1 (NW)	4 (1)
Region 2 (NE)	4 (0)
Region 3 (SW)	11 (3)
Region 4 (EC)	6 (0)
Region 5 (SE)	1 (0)
Region 6 (Central)	10 (0)
Region 7 (Tulsa)	39 (16)
Region 8 (OKC)	49 (3)
Total	124* (23)
Other Types of Facilities	
Focus Facilities	3 (0)
Rehabilitation Facilities	0 (0)
Tribal Facilities	3 (2)
Other Facilities Total	6 (2)

*Includes 24 hospitalizations in pediatric beds.

**Focus, Rehabilitation and Tribal Facilities numbers are not assigned to a specific region as their patient populations reside across the state. Information provided through survey of Oklahoma hospitals as reported to HHS as of the time of this report. Response rate affects data. Facilities may update previously reported information as necessary.

Data Source: Acute Disease Service, Oklahoma State Department of Health.

*As of 2022-06-16 at 7:00 a.m.



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