



VA NATIONAL CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS

Research-driven solutions to prevent and end homelessness

Addressing homelessness and housing instability to prevent suicide

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Brief outline

1. What is the link between homelessness and suicide?
2. How do VA homeless programs impact suicide risk?
3. What are outcomes from the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program?

Suicide risk among homeless populations

- Review of suicide attempt rates among homeless veterans (Hoffberg et al., 2018)
 - 0-6% in past month
 - 31-32% in past 5 years
 - 15-47% lifetime (compared to 0.7-8.7% in general U.S. population)
 - Rate of death by suicide was 81.0 per 100,000 (compared to 35.8 per 100,000 in domiciled veterans)
- Association between lifetime homelessness and suicide attempt is greater for veterans than other adults (**adjusted OR= 3.75 vs. 1.83**) (Tsai & Cao, 2019)

Citations: Hoffberg, A. S., Spitzer, E., Mackelprang, J. L., Farro, S. A., & Brenner, L. A. (2018). Suicidal self-directed violence among homeless US Veterans: a systematic review. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 48(4), 481-498.

Tsai, J., & Cao, X. (2019). Association between suicide attempts and homelessness in a population-based sample of US veterans and non-veterans. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 73(4), 346-352.

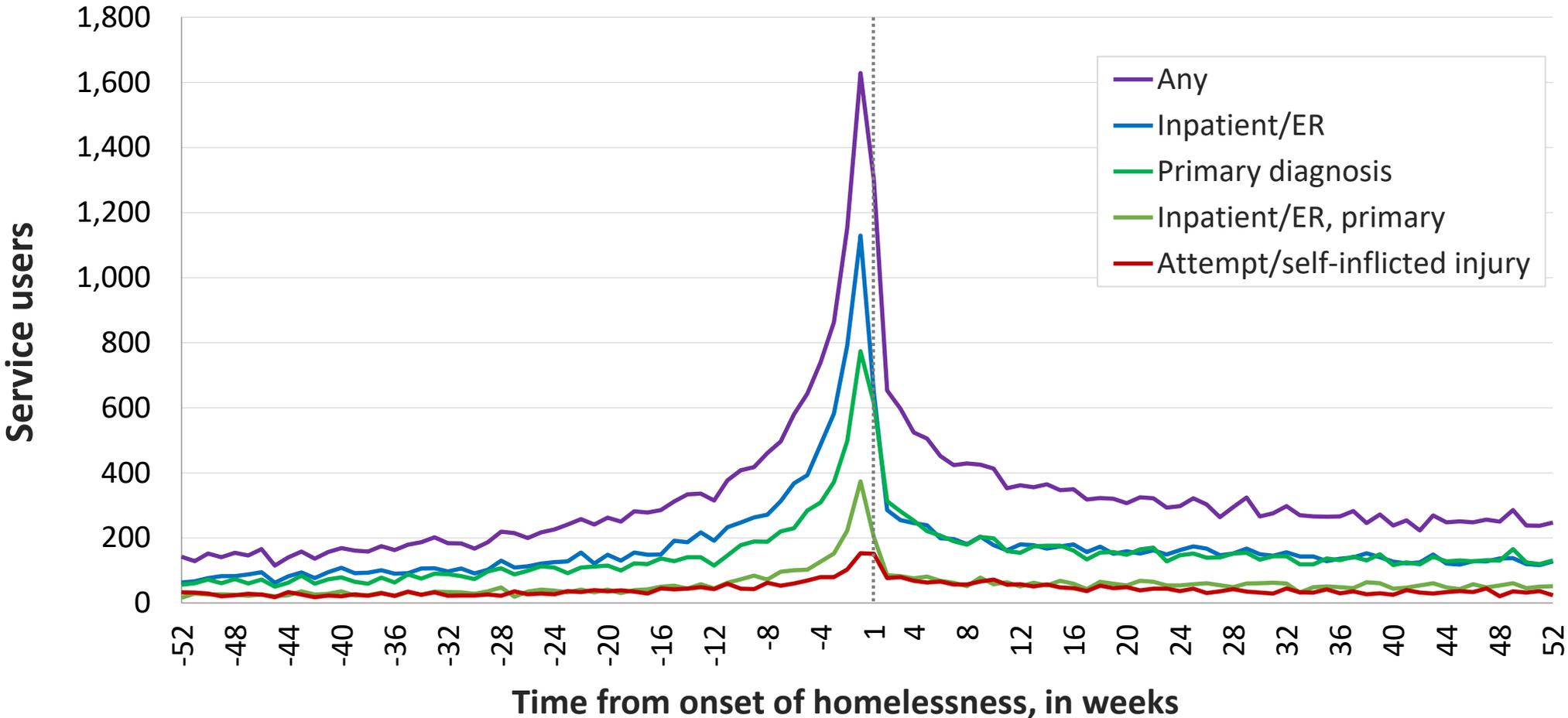


Shared Risk Factors

Homelessness	Completed Suicide
Male	Male
Low socioeconomic status	Low socioeconomic status
Mental illness	Mental illness
Substance use disorders	Substance use disorders
Lack of social support	Lack of social support
Chronic medical conditions	Chronic medical conditions
Adverse childhood events	Adverse childhood events
History of incarceration	Family history of suicides
Past homeless episodes	Past suicidal attempts



Suicidality-related service use around onset of homelessness (n= 152,519 veterans)



Citation: Culhane, D., Szymkowiak, D., & Schinka, J. A. (2019). Suicidality and the onset of homelessness: evidence for a temporal association from VHA treatment records. *Psychiatric Services, 70*(11), 1049-1052.

VA homeless programs

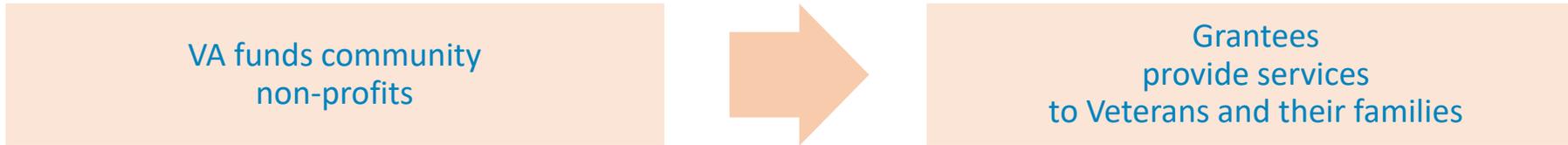
VA Homeless Program	Description
Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Offers permanent independent housing through subsidized rent and case management
Grant and Per Diem (GPD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Operated by community agencies to provide transitional housing
Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provides case management and/or contract residential treatment
Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Time-limited residential treatment on VA grounds
Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residence (CWT/TR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Clinical vocational rehabilitation program for homeless veterans
Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Operated by community agencies to provide time-limited case management and financial assistance

Participation in VA homeless programs reduces all-cause and suicide mortality

- Data from 169,221 veterans who self-reported housing instability
 - 93,135 veterans used a VA homeless program
- Use of any VA homeless program was associated with a 6% reduction in hazards of all-cause mortality and 21% reduced hazards of suicide mortality.
- With each additional VA homeless program accessed, there was a 7% reduced hazards in all-cause mortality and a 19% reduced hazards of suicide death.
- Homeless services address social determinants of physical and mental health.

Citation: Montgomery, A. E., Dichter, M., Byrne, T., & Blosnich, J. (2021). Intervention to address homelessness and all-cause and suicide mortality among unstably housed US Veterans, 2012–2016. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 75(4), 380-386.

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program



Program Components

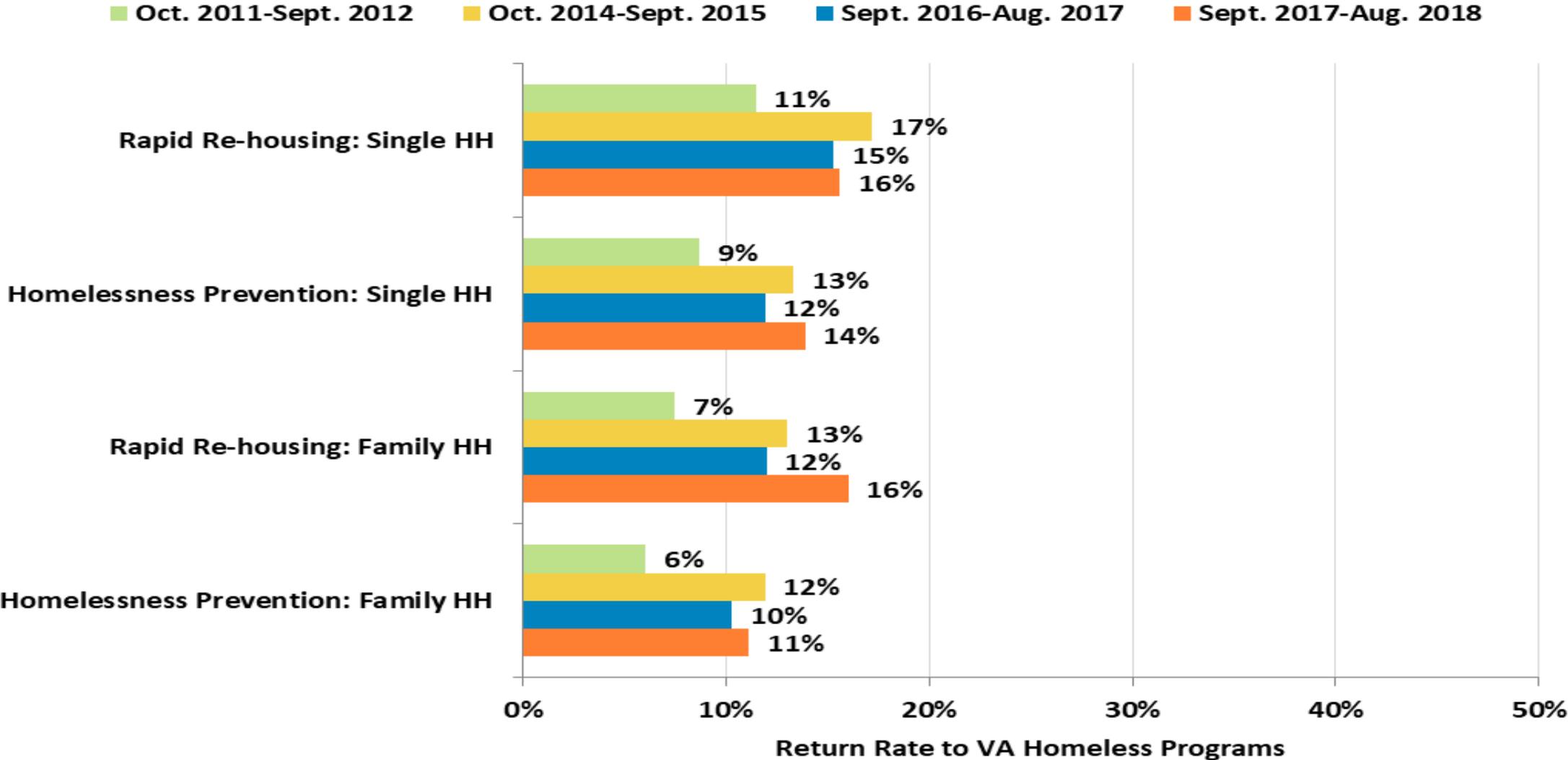
1. Rapid Re-housing

- Prioritizes literally homeless veterans
- Brief case management services
- Offers housing identification
- Provides rental and utility assistance (<6 months or less)

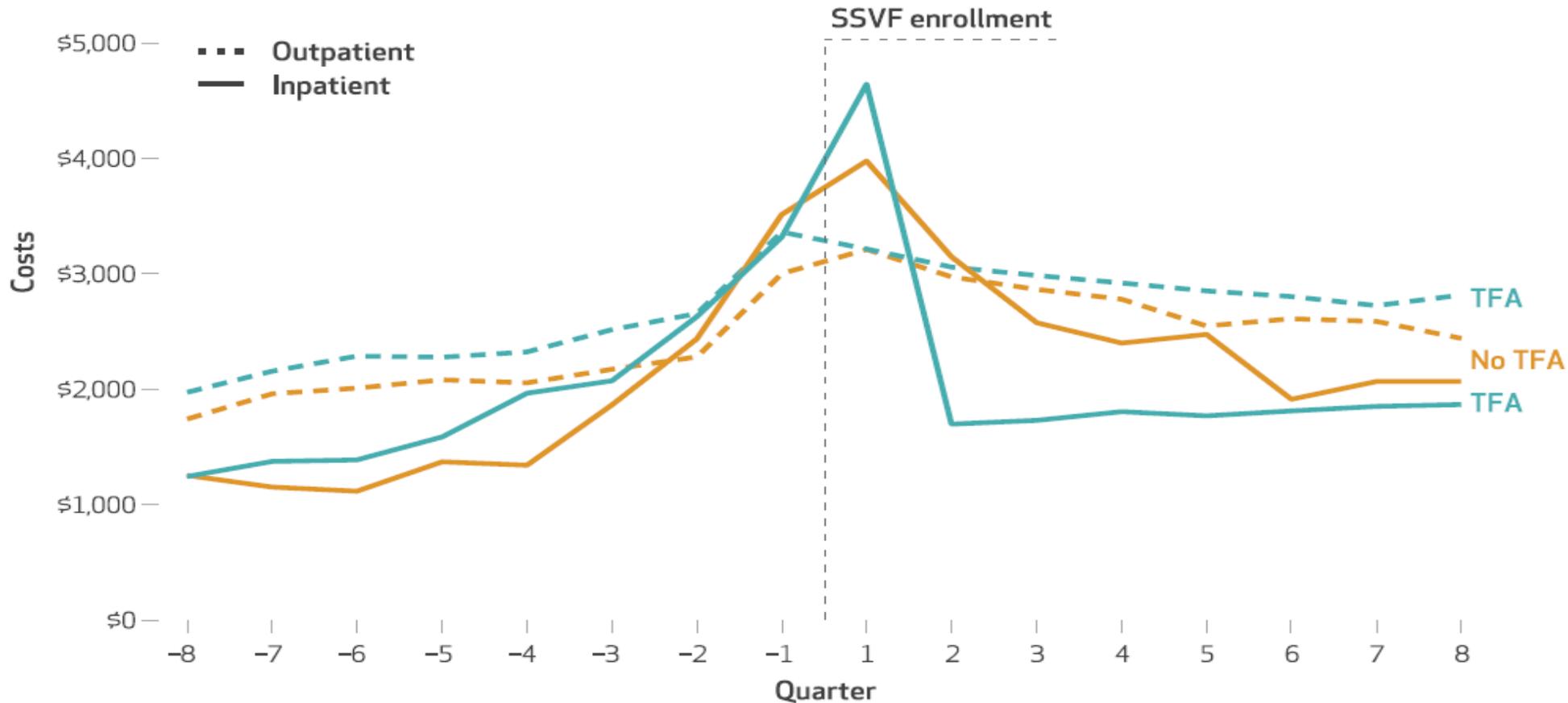
2. Homeless prevention

- Targets veterans at imminent risk of homelessness
- Brief case management services
- Temporary financial assistance

1-Year Return Rate to Homelessness (VA Programs)



SSVF temporary financial assistance



SOURCE Authors' analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) data from cohort of SSVF enrollees, fiscal years 2016–18. **NOTES** Outpatient costs are included only for veterans enrolled in the homelessness prevention component of the SSVF program. Inpatient costs are included only for veterans enrolled in the rapid rehousing component of the SSVF program. TFA is temporary financial assistance.

	Total Average Costs	Inpatient Average Costs	Outpatient Average Costs
Per Veteran	- \$352	- \$372	+ 20

Citation: Nelson, R. E., Montgomery, A. E., Suo, Y. et al. (2021). Temporary financial assistance decreased health care costs for veterans experiencing housing instability: Study examines temporary financial assistance and health care costs for veterans experiencing housing instability. *Health Affairs*, 40(5), 820-828.

Conclusions

1. There is strong link between homelessness and suicide with suicide risk often preceding.
2. Participation in VA homeless programs reduce risk of death including suicides.
3. The SSVF program is a VA-community partnership model that can address social determinants of health and healthcare costs.



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THANK YOU!

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