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# Virtual Events

## Strokes Can Happen at Any Age

Wednesday, May 11, 6-7 pm



Rajiv Padmanabhan, MD

Being young doesn't rule you out for having a stroke. Strokes in young people have increased 40 percent in the past few decades. But the majority of strokes happen over age 55. Join Dr. Rajiv Padmanabhan, neurologist, Baystate Neurology, Assistant Professor, UMass Chan Medical School-Baystate, for a discussion about strokes at all ages, and the ways to prevent a stroke.

## Women, Do You Know Your Risk For Stroke?

Thursday, May 12, 6-7 pm



Heydi Flores Podadera, MD

Stroke kills twice as many women as breast cancer does according to the CDC. Join Dr. Heydi Flores Podadera, neurologist, Baystate Neurology, for a discussion of stroke specific to women, the factors that contribute to strokes in women and how to prevent a stroke from happening.



## What Kind Of Headache Do You Have? A Neurologist Breaks It Down

Wednesday, June 1, 6-7 pm



James Otis, MD

We've all been there before: A headache attacks us unexpectedly or a dull pulse builds in our head hour-after-hour. Headaches can be unnerving, and turning to Google to explain your symptoms can often lead to more panic and confusion.

Today, 50-75% of adults experience headaches and they often interfere

with our ability to go about our daily lives. Join Dr. James Otis, neurologist, Baystate Neurology, who helps break down the different types of headaches you might experience on any given day.

## More Than Forgetfulness

Thursday, June 9, 6-7 pm



Stuart Anfang, MD

Alzheimer's disease and dementia insidiously rob people of their memories and wreak havoc on the lives of their loved ones. Join Dr. Stuart Anfang, chief, Baystate Behavioral Health, for a discussion about Alzheimer's disease and dementia, including diagnosis, stages, myth busters, how they affect the brain, and today's treatments.



## To register

for any of the virtual events visit [BaystateHealth.org/EveryWoman](https://www.baystatehealth.org/EveryWoman)  
Questions? Email [Sue.Fontaine@BaystateHealth.org](mailto:Sue.Fontaine@BaystateHealth.org) or call 413-794-5200.

Use cellphone camera and click the pop-up.

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**Visit [BaystateHealth.org/Every Woman](https://www.baystatehealth.org/EveryWoman)**

## Postpartum Pelvic Floor Health

Tuesday, June 14, 2022, 6-7 pm



Deepali Maheshwari, MD

Pregnancy and childbirth can lead to pelvic floor disorders that are often overlooked during a particularly overwhelming and stressful time. Join Dr. Deepali Maheshwari, Urogynecologist, Baystate Urogynecology, for a discussion about pelvic floor complications that can occur during pregnancy and after delivery, and tips and treatments for healthy healing and recovery. There will be time for questions & answers.



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Watch recorded events anytime at [BaystateHealth.org/EveryWoman](https://BaystateHealth.org/EveryWoman).

### Are you receiving the Baystate Health Every Woman monthly email

with links to articles and virtual events, as well as recorded virtual events?

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Baystate Health is a leading not-for-profit health system with the charitable mission of improving the health of the people in our communities every day, with quality and compassion.



## Postpartum Pelvic Floor Clinic

Our new Postpartum Pelvic Floor Clinic offers comprehensive and compassionate care to manage pelvic floor complications during pregnancy and after delivery.

Our multidisciplinary team of experts will work with you to promote healthy healing of the pelvic floor up to one year after delivery. Conditions addressed include:

#### Vaginal and Vulvar

- Complex vaginal tears or delayed wound healing
- Vaginal bulge or pressure
- Vaginal cysts

#### Bladder Conditions

- Urinary incontinence
- Urinary retention
- Overactive bladder

#### Bowel Conditions

- Fecal incontinence
- Fistula

#### Other Conditions

- Sexual dysfunction
- Pelvic muscle weakness

Use cellphone camera and click the pop-up.

For more information visit [BaystateHealth.org/urogyn](https://BaystateHealth.org/urogyn) or call Baystate Urogynecology at 413-795-8764





# A RARE HEART TUMOR SPELLED RELIEF AFTER YEARS OF MYSTERIOUS PAIN

**Kalia Furnari battled intense nerve pain and migraine headaches for decades until Baystate Health experts discovered the cause and removed a tumor from her heart.**

Climbing trees and using a chainsaw are all in a day's work for urban forester Kalia Furnari who works with her boyfriend, Chris McCormick, who runs a tree trimming company. Active, fit and full of positive energy, you would never guess Kalia, age 40, has also battled a mysterious and often painful medical condition almost her entire life.

"I never felt right. My body felt heavy and I sometimes had migraines that would leave part of my face temporarily paralyzed," said Kalia, who grew up in Springfield, MA and now lives in Connecticut. About three years ago, her condition worsened and Kalia had regular flare-ups of excruciating nerve pain. "I couldn't work, I couldn't put shoes on, it hurt to shower. I had over 15 migraines a month. I blacked out. You would think someone died, the way I would cry. The pain was bad – and I have a really high pain tolerance so it was not in my nature to be like that," she said.

## **SOLVING THE MYSTERY**

Over the decades, Kalia visited many types of specialists throughout New England and underwent test after test. These appointments would lead to temporary relief of some of her symptoms, but no one could find

the source of her condition. On her own, she tried any treatment and lifestyle change she could, including sugar-free and gluten-free diets for her migraines. Although some people called her a hypochondriac, she knew her experience was real. It was frustrating, but she continued to search for an answer.

After an MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging test) at Baystate Medical Center showed abnormalities in her brain, neurologist Dr. William House confirmed that Kalia had suffered from a stroke during one of her last episodes. With this knowledge, he referred her to Baystate Cardiology in Northampton for an echocardiogram with PA (physician assistant) Nancy Logan. Kalia's echocardiogram (an ultrasound of the heart) showed a rare type of tumor the size of a baseball.

## **CARDIAC MYXOMA: A RARE HEART TUMOR**

This tumor (a cardiac myxoma) was like a gelatinous blob moving around, covering and uncovering her heart valve, which meant her heart wasn't always receiving the oxygenated blood it needed.

Pieces of the tumor were also floating to her brain, which caused both her stroke and her ongoing nerve

pain and other lifelong symptoms. When PA Nancy Logan saw the echocardiogram, she moved quickly and called an ambulance to get Kalia to the Harold Grinspoon & Diane Troderman Adult Emergency Department at Baystate Medical Center.

“When I heard the diagnosis,” Kalia said, “my first response wasn’t so much fear as it was relief that I finally knew what the problem was after all these years. I can’t thank Baystate Health enough for that.”

### A TICKING TIME BOMB

Kalia was scheduled for open heart surgery at Baystate’s Davis Family Heart & Vascular Center to remove the tumor on September 11, a day she later named her rebirthday.



*Kelly Wanamaker, MD*

Cardiac surgeon Dr. Kelly Wanamaker said, “I knew I needed to remove the tumor. With every heartbeat, there was a potential risk of harm. It was a ticking time bomb.”

Kalia was nervous about surgery. She worried about if she would make it through and what if she didn’t have a chance to say goodbye to her

boyfriend, Chris, and her family. “Dr. Wanamaker calmed me down, explained what she and her team would do and gave me a chance to ask questions,” Kalia said. “She was also good at talking with my mom. With Dr. Wanamaker, I felt a connection and was completely comfortable with her. She put me at ease.”

Dr. Wanamaker said she and Kalia had a great patient-surgeon relationship and both fed off the others’ positive energy. “Before surgery,” Dr. Wanamaker said, “it’s important to me to get to know each of my patients and understand what their lifestyle is like. I could see that Kalia was motivated to improve her quality of life and get back to her job. Our goal is to get patients back to the life that they were living, but even better.”

### THE SCAR OF HONOR

Dr. Wanamaker removed Kalia’s tumor and completed the operation with her expert cardiac surgery team. Kalia has a long scar on her chest from the surgery. “I call it the seam that holds me together,” Kalia said, smiling. “Dr. Wanamaker did an amazing job.”

Like a warrior, Kalia considers the scar her badge of honor. It reminds her of everything she went through and accomplished.

### RECOVERING AT HER OWN PACE

After the surgery, Kalia recovered at Baystate Medical Center. “I’ll always remember one Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) in particular who really made me feel at home.” Having been a CNA before studying to become an arborist, Kalia appreciated her care team even more. “I know how busy everyone is, but they never made me feel like they were rushing and trying to hurry me up,” Kalia said. “Right from the get go, I knew Baystate Health was the best place to be. The care is innovative and on point.”

Kalia also appreciated Baystate Health’s visitor policy. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Baystate Health limited the number of visitors in the hospital for the safety of patients and caregivers. Kalia says she didn’t mind these restrictions since they made her feel safer. She talked on the phone with friends and family for “visits.”

### A WHOLE NEW WORLD

Looking back on her decades of struggle with her health, Kalia’s advice to others is, “Even if people say you’re crazy, know you know yourself. Don’t give up. Keep pushing and be your own advocate. I really want to help people not go through what I did.”

“I feel normal now and it’s great to be able to drag brush and move without getting dizzy,” she said.

As Kalia wrote on social media after her surgery, “It’s a whole new world and I’m glad to be a part of it still.”

### LEARN MORE ABOUT BAYSTATE’S HEART & VASCULAR PROGRAM

**Your heart is in good hands with Baystate’s team of cardiovascular doctors, specialists, and nurses. We offer expert cardiac care from diagnosis through treatment and rehabilitation. Visit [BaystateHealth.org/Kalia](https://BaystateHealth.org/Kalia)**



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# How do You Know if You Have a Thyroid Problem?

An estimated 20 million Americans have some form of thyroid disease—roughly 12% of the population—and most of them don't even know there's a problem. "That," says Dr. Ibitoro Osakwe, Chief and fellowship program director of the Division of Endocrinology and Diabetes at Baystate Medical Center, "is because the symptoms of the most common thyroid diseases, hypo- and hyperthyroidism, are easy to confuse with the symptoms of other common conditions and certain stages of life."



Ibitoro Osakwe, MD

Before we dive into those conditions, let's first look at what exactly the thyroid is and does.

## WHAT DOES YOUR THYROID DO?

The thyroid is a small butterfly shaped gland located in the middle of the lower neck. The function of the thyroid gland is regulated by another hormone called Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH), which comes from the pituitary or "master" gland. A properly functioning thyroid produces thyroid hormone, thyroxine and triiodothyronine (T4 and T3), that regulate the body's metabolism—the rate at which the body produces energy from nutrients and oxygen—and affects critical body functions, such as cholesterol levels, mood, bone density, and heart rate. In fact, thyroid hormone influences every cell, tissue, and organ in the body. That's a lot of power for a little organ.

According to Osakwe, "Most people with normal thyroid function fall within a known range of thyroid hormone levels (TSH, FT4 and FT3). If your body is producing the right amount, all is well. But, if for some reason your body starts to produce too much or too little, it can lead to thyroid disease."

## WHO IS AT RISK OF THYROID DISEASE?

Thyroid disease is a general term for a medical condition that keeps your thyroid from making the right amount of hormones. Thyroid disease can affect anyone — men, women, infants, teens, and the elderly. You may be born with it, or it can develop as you age. While anyone can have thyroid disease, it most often occurs in women, often after menopause.

Other factors that put you at higher risk of developing a thyroid disease include:

- A family history of thyroid disease
- Certain medical conditions including Type 1 diabetes, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, and pernicious anemia
- Use of medication high in iodine
- Being over age 60, especially so for women
- Previous history of a thyroid condition or cancer

## WHAT ARE HYPOTHYROIDISM AND HYPERTHYROIDISM?

The two most common thyroid diseases, hypo- and hyperthyroidism represent the extremes of TSH production.

"Hypothyroidism is when the thyroid is underactive and doesn't produce enough thyroid hormone (T4 and T3)" says Osakwe. "On the other end of the spectrum, is hyperthyroidism which occurs when you have an over-active thyroid that produces too much T4 and T3." Both conditions can be caused by other diseases that impact the way the thyroid gland works.

Here's how the symptoms differ:

### Hypothyroidism

Symptoms of hypothyroidism can be different for different people, especially in the earliest stages. However, some common symptoms that occur when low levels of thyroid hormone slow down some or your body's systems include:

- Feeling tired
- Weight gain
- Muscle weakness
- Forgetfulness
- Feeling cold or intolerant of the cold
- Constipation
- Dry skin
- Elevated cholesterol levels
- Thinning hair
- Hoarseness



## Hyperthyroidism

Hyperthyroidism can be hard to recognize as some of the most common symptoms of are a lot like other conditions. They can include:

- Feelings of anxiety, irritability, and nervousness
- Difficulty sleeping
- A racing or uneven heartbeat
- Unexplained weight loss
- Larger appetite than usual
- Sensitivity to heat
- Sweating
- More frequent bowel movements
- Thinning skin
- Changes to your period
- Tremors
- Vision problems

## HOW IS THYROID DISEASE DIAGNOSED AND TREATED?

Thyroid disease is diagnosed through a simple blood test to check your TSH and thyroid hormone (T4, T3) levels.

“In the case of hypothyroidism, standard treatment consists of a daily use of a synthetic thyroid hormone levothyroxine in the form of a pill,” says Osakwe. “This oral medication works to restore adequate hormone levels and reduce symptoms. For most patients, medication for hypothyroidism will need to be taken for the rest of their life to keep the disease under control. Your doctor will check your TSH levels annually and make adjustments based on the findings.”

Like hypothyroidism, the first step in diagnosing hyperthyroidism is a blood test. “Depending upon the patient and how they’re presenting, a nuclear scan may also be ordered,” says Osakwe.

Treatment for hyperthyroidism is also very individual. Depending upon a patient’s age, physical condition, severity of the disease, the underlying cause and patient preference, potential treatment options may include:

- Daily beta blocker pills
- Anti-thyroid medication, typically taken for a year or more
- Radioactive iodine
- Surgery

Osakwe notes, “Very often, thyroid disease is a life-long medical condition that will need to be managed constantly. Thyroid disease can be tricky, and it may take some time and different approaches to find the right treatment for you. However, once they find a way to control their hormone production, most people with thyroid disease manage to live a full and normal life.”

## LEARN MORE ABOUT THYROID CARE AT BAYSTATE HEALTH.

Visit <https://www.baystatehealth.org/services/endocrinology/thyroid-clinic>



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# How to Practice and Improve He

## **WHEN IT COMES TO HEART HEALTH MINDFULNESS MATTERS**

Heart disease has been the number one killer in the United States for decades. According to Dr. Adam Stern, MD, FACC, Preventive Cardiologist, Baystate Medical Center, “Six-hundred and sixty thousand Americans die from heart disease every year. Patients lucky enough to survive a cardiac event need to take stock of the lifestyle and health factors that contributed to their condition and place them at risk for another event.”

The biggest risk factors for developing heart disease (and increased risk of recurrence of a cardiac event) are: high blood pressure, smoking, a diet high in saturated fats and sugar, unhealthy weight, high cholesterol, and a sedentary lifestyle.

But there’s another factor—one we’re all familiar with—that also has a significant impact on heart health: Stress.

## **THE HEART DISEASE-STRESS LINK**

While we experience stress in our minds, it can take a serious toll on our heart in several ways.

First, stress can increase inflammation in your body, which can lead to a variety of health concerns. Second, when you experience stress, your body releases a surge of hormones, including adrenaline which increases your heart rate and elevates your blood pressure. In addition, people experiencing stress tend to sleep poorly. When you sleep poorly, you’re less likely to exercise or eat well. And the risk factors compound.

## **TACKLING STRESS ONE THOUGHT AT A TIME**

Rabbi Ken Hahn, Interfaith Chaplain, Baystate Spiritual Services is very familiar with the impact stress can have on patients after a cardiac event.

# Mindfulness to Reduce Stress and Heart Health

As a spiritual caregiver, he regularly visits with patients who are facing a new reality after a heart attack, stroke, or other cardiac event or procedure.

“The thing about a cardiac health crisis of any kind is it’s scary,” says Hahn. “There’s a lot of anxiety and fear around whether it might happen again and how your life may change. That kind of uncertainty can be incredibly stressful.

“Plus, the experience of being in a hospital can be very isolating—especially now during COVID. Often the vital connections we have to family, friends, faith, and community are disrupted. In the absence of those connections, stress levels go up and people often fall into depression. Stress can quickly become a downward spiral that feeds upon itself. It’s my role to help patients find ways to address their stress and, in turn, improve their mental and heart health.”

## TAPPING THE POWER OF MINDFULNESS

Hahn defines mindfulness as “the capacity to pay full attention to what is going on in ourselves and the world around us without any judgment or evaluation.”

The goal, he explains, is to be present in the moment and not indulge in feeling anxious about fears for the future or sad about regrets from the past.

“Mindfulness,” he says, “let’s us savor the good stuff that’s taking place right now. When you do that, you suddenly see the small miracles in life. With each miracle, your heart becomes lighter and your stress lifts.”



Adam Stern, MD



Rabbi Hahn

Hahn is quick to acknowledge that while it sounds simple, mindfulness can be difficult to achieve. Here’s why:

“Thoughts are what drive our emotions. The average person has easily 6,000 thoughts a day. For some, the number’s more like 60,000. And of those thousands of thoughts, 80% or more are negative.”

The key to managing all those thoughts and not succumbing to all that negativity is to be responsive and not reactive to your thoughts.

“That is,” explains Hahn, “you have to learn to break the habit of immediately reacting to a thought or experience and allow yourself, for just a moment, to stop and observe what’s happening or what you’re thinking without judgement. You’ve got to hit pause on your hardwired reactivity...instead of thinking ‘I’m so angry,’ you need to notice ‘that made me angry.’ You want to be an observer of your own thoughts so that you can control whatever action you take next instead of your emotions driving your behavior. Doing this one little thing can help bring you into the moment and stop your mind from racing and keep anger from becoming rage or fear from becoming paranoia. Your anxiety and stress are reduced and heart beats a little easier.”

## MINDFULNESS IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND

There are many options out there for learning and practicing mindfulness, with many apps offering limited free versions or full versions at a cost.

**Here are some resources recommended by Rabbi Hahn:**

- > Breathe
- > Headspace
- > The UC San Diego Center for Mindfulness (free audio and video)

**If you have questions about your heart health, contact the Baystate Health Heart & Vascular program or talk with your primary care provider.**

**Do you need a primary care provider? Call 413-794-5412 or visit [BaystateHealth.org/Primary](https://www.baystatehealth.org/Primary)**



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## STROKE CARE INSPIRES PATIENT TO FOLLOW IN HER MOM'S FOOTSTEPS

**Tyana was only 22 when she had a stroke. Her mom rushed her to the ER, where Baystate Medical Center staff worked fast to prevent paralysis or worse.**



*Ennis J. Duffis, MD*

It all happened so quickly. Tyana DeJesus was near the end of her shift at a local shoe store when she suddenly went down on one knee because she thought she was going to pass out. The 22-year-old noticed her hearing was muffled. She was seeing double and couldn't move the left side of her body. While her coworkers tried to help her, Tyana's manager called Tyana's mom, Jacqueline, and said, "Something's not right, something's not right, her words are slurring." Tyana's mom arrived at the store and immediately drove Tyana to the Baystate Medical Center Harold Grinspoon & Diane Troderman Adult Emergency Department.

Arriving at the Emergency Department, Tyana remembers feeling so sick she vomited in her mask. She couldn't speak correctly or walk. "I'm grateful that

Baystate took action as fast as they could. I was the priority," she said. Emergency Medicine physician Dr. Jessica Patel examined Tyana and ordered an immediate CT (Computed Tomography) scan of Tyana's head.

The Director of Neurointerventional Surgery, neurologist Dr. Ennis J. Duffis, reviewed the scan which showed a blood clot in Tyana's brain was blocking the main artery that carries blood to the back of the brain.

"Tyana had what we call a basilar artery occlusion, which is one of the most severe kind of strokes a person can have," Dr. Duffis said. If left untreated, a stroke may leave a patient paralyzed, cause the patient to slip into a coma or even result in death.

"When they told me I was having a stroke," Tyana said, "I looked at my mom and we were both crying. I asked my doctors to please not let me die. I haven't lived my life. I haven't achieved any of my goals."

### **ACTING QUICKLY TO REMOVE THE CLOT**

Dr. Duffis recommended that Tyana have a thrombectomy, a procedure in which a catheter is inserted through an artery in the groin allowing doctors to reach the clot and remove it. "Dr. Duffis told my mom,

'If it was my daughter, I would want her to have the procedure as quickly as possible.'" This was all Tyana's mom needed to hear, and she gave permission to have the procedure done.

There wasn't time to wait for a patient transporter to arrive. "I wheeled Tyana to surgery myself because time is brain," Dr. Duffis said. "Tyana's mother deserves a lot of credit for taking action and getting Tyana to our ER right away. When it comes to strokes, the faster you act, the less damage is done." Dr. Duffis urges everyone to learn the warning signs of a stroke and if you even suspect a stroke, get to the ER.

Tyana said lying on the gurney and being wheeled into surgery was like what you see in the movies. "They're pushing you and you're looking up and all you see is lights going by and nurses and doctors around you. I remember them telling me not to worry, that they would take care of me."

The surgery team was able to remove the clot before it did any permanent damage. Because Baystate Health care teams can communicate quickly and coordinate care across departments, Tyana did not need to be transferred and the procedure was done right away. "I believe this ability to deliver advanced, coordinated care led to Tyana's full recovery," Dr. Duffis said.

### LOVE AND CARING

The surgery went well and Tyana was moved to the ICU (Intensive Care Unit) to recover. "Dr Patel and Dr. Duffis came to visit me and see how I was feeling," Tyana said. After surgery, her vision, speech and hearing were all normal again. Dr. Duffis remembers the look on her face and how amazed she was with her recovery. "Seeing that was very gratifying," he said.

"I always put myself in the shoes of the patient and think of them as a I would a family member," Dr. Duffis said. "I try to keep my patients informed every step of the way including how the procedure went and what to expect next. That's what I would expect from my physician if I were in the patient's shoes."

"At one point," Tyana said, "my nurse answered my phone for me. I was on FaceTime and my whole family was outside in the parking lot because visitors weren't allowed because of COVID. My family was waving and smiling and all I could hear was them all shouting, 'We love you! We can't wait to see you! You did so good!'"

And it wasn't just her family cheering her on. "Since I couldn't have visitors, the staff were my visitors," Tyana said. "My nurses really took care of me and were in

and out of the room all the time. Everyone was just really nice. I felt like all the nurses and the PCTs took care of me as if I was their own."

### SO YOUNG TO HAVE A STROKE

"It's rare to see this kind of stroke in someone so young," Dr. Duffis said. In hopes of finding the cause of Tyana's stroke, several tests were done while she was in the hospital recovering. Doctors found that Tyana had a patent foramen ovale which is an opening between the right and left sides of the heart. Although everyone is born with this opening, it closes on its own soon after birth for most people. For Tyana, it did not close.

Tyana's doctors determined that this opening in her heart was the cause of her stroke. "We believe that a blood clot formed on the right side of the heart, then traveled across the opening to the left side of the heart and then up into the brain," Dr. Duffis said. In a follow-up procedure, cardiologist Dr. Evan Lau and his cardiac surgery team, successfully closed this opening in her heart.

### A FAMILY LEGACY AND NEW PERSPECTIVE

Tyana said she feels great and is back at work. "Having a stroke changed my perspective and it changed the type of person and the type of nurse that I want to be," said Tyana who was in school with goals of becoming a nurse before her stroke.

Tyana comes from a family of nurses. Her mom, grandma and some of her cousins are all nurses. "Just being at Baystate, I knew that I wanted to help people like the Baystate Health caregivers helped me." Tyana said.

"I think it's amazing that she wants to be a nurse and I'm just glad that I was able to play a small part in keeping her on track to becoming a healthcare provider," Dr. Duffis said.

"Before my stroke," Tyana said, "I thought I wanted to be a nurse, but now I know that I want to be a nurse."

### LEARN MORE ABOUT BAYSTATE HEALTH'S LIFESAVING CARE

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