

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF UTAH,
CENTRAL DIVISION

John R., individually and on behalf of W.R., a minor v. HMO
Louisiana Inc. and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana

John R. · No. 2:26-cv-00066 · Decided March 18, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Utah granted John R. and his minor son W.R. leave to proceed using initials in an ERISA action challenging the denial of insurance coverage for the minor’s care. The court found that the case involved highly sensitive and personal health information, ordered the notice containing the plaintiffs’ full names to remain sealed, and allowed objections to the pseudonymous proceeding within seven days of a party’s appearance.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Utah, Central Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Daphne A. Oberg
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Utah, Central Division
DECIDED	March 18, 2026
DOCKET	2:26-cv-00066
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiffs moved for leave to proceed under initials and pseudonymously after filing the action using initials and a partial name.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court exercised discretion by weighing the parties' privacy interests against the public's interest in access to judicial proceedings.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished memorandum decision and order; precedential status not stated.
PARTIES	John R., individually and on behalf of W.R., a minor v. HMO Louisiana Inc., Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- insurance
- health law
- medical records privacy
- pleadings

PRACTICE AREAS

Civil procedure

ERISA

Insurance benefits

Health law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Plaintiffs should be permitted to proceed under initials and pseudonymously because the action involves a minor's highly sensitive and personal health information.

HOLDINGS

1. Plaintiffs may proceed under initials and pseudonymously because the case involves highly sensitive and personal health information concerning a minor, and the privacy interests supporting anonymity outweigh the limited public interest in the parties' identities.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Additionally, a party may proceed anonymously in “exceptional cases involving matters of a highly sensitive and personal nature, real danger of physical harm, or where the injury litigated against would be incurred as a result of the disclosure of the [party’s] identity.””

“Because this case involves W.R.’s highly sensitive and personal health information, Plaintiffs’ motion is granted.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

John R. and his minor son, W.R., brought an ERISA action challenging the denial of insurance benefits for care W.R. received as a minor. The complaint contained sensitive information concerning W.R.'s personal circumstances and serious mental-health issues. Disclosure of John R.'s identity would effectively reveal W.R.'s identity.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

John R. and his minor son, W.R., filed an ERISA action alleging that Defendants denied insurance coverage for care received by W.R. The court ordered Plaintiffs to comply with the local rules governing anonymous litigation. Plaintiffs filed a motion for leave to proceed anonymously and a sealed notice containing their full names; the court granted the motion.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Nat’l Commodity & Barter Ass’n v. Gibbs, 886 F.2d 1240, 1245 (10th Cir. 1989)
- Femedeer v. Haun, 227 F.3d 1244, 1246 (10th Cir. 2000)
- Doe v. Frank, 951 F.2d 320, 324 (11th Cir. 1992)

- S.E.S. v. Galena Unified Sch. Dist. No. 499, No. 18-2042, 2018 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 116054, at *4 (D. Kan. July 12, 2018)

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