

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Tahtiana Jade Brown v. LucidWorks, et al.

Brown v. LucidWorks · No. 2:25-cv-00607-DC-CKD (PS) · Decided February 26, 2025

SUMMARY

The magistrate judge recommends denying plaintiff Tahtiana Brown’s motion for a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction seeking to halt a Workers’ Compensation Appeals Board proceeding. The recommendation concludes that the motion is procedurally defective under Eastern District of California Local Rule 231 and that plaintiff failed to establish irreparable harm or a likelihood of success on the merits. The court also questions subject-matter jurisdiction because HIPAA provides no private cause of action and the complaint does not clearly establish another federal question.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Carolyn K. Delaney
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	February 26, 2025
DOCKET	2:25-cv-00607-DC-CKD (PS)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff moved for a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction to enjoin an upcoming Workers’ Compensation Appeals Board trial. The magistrate judge issued findings and recommendations that the motion be denied and advised the parties of the procedure for filing objections.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction requests are evaluated under substantially identical standards. The movant must establish likelihood of success on the merits, likelihood of irreparable harm absent relief, that the balance of equities favors relief, and that an injunction is in the public interest. The court may also apply the Ninth Circuit sliding-scale test, under which a stronger showing on one element may offset a weaker showing on another.

PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential findings and recommendations; precedential status unknown
PARTIES	Tahtiana Jade Brown v. LucidWorks, et al.

TOPICS

injunctions civil procedure subject matter jurisdiction hipaa medical records privacy

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure injunctive relief federal jurisdiction health law medical records privacy

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether plaintiff's motion for a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction should be denied for failing to comply with the Eastern District of California's procedural requirements for temporary restraining orders.
2. Whether plaintiff established a likelihood of success on the merits and likelihood of irreparable harm sufficient to obtain a temporary restraining order or preliminary injunction.
3. Whether plaintiff's workers' compensation proceeding was removable under 28 U.S.C. § 1445(c).
4. Whether plaintiff's complaint established a federal question or other basis for subject matter jurisdiction, including through its HIPAA claim.

HOLDINGS

1. The motion was procedurally defective because plaintiff did not file the required briefing, affidavit concerning irreparable injury, affidavit concerning notice or justification for dispensing with notice, or proposed order. Failure to comply with the local rule independently justified denial of the requested temporary restraining order.
2. Plaintiff failed to establish the likelihood of success on the merits or a likelihood of irreparable harm, and therefore did not satisfy the requirements for a temporary restraining order or preliminary injunction.
3. Based on the information before the court, the workers' compensation case appeared to be non-removable because 28 U.S.C. § 1445(c) prohibits removal of a civil action arising under a state's workers' compensation laws.
4. HIPAA does not provide a private right of action, and plaintiff therefore could not establish federal-question jurisdiction solely by pleading a HIPAA violation.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"The purpose of a temporary restraining order under Rule 65(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure is to preserve the status quo and to prevent irreparable harm "so long as is necessary to hold a hearing, and no longer."" (at 2)

“a civil action in any State court arising under the workmen’s compensation laws of such State may not be removed to any district court of the United States.” (at 4)

“HIPAA does not provide any private right of action” (at 5)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleged that she was involved in a workers’ compensation case and had moved to quash a subpoena for her medical records. She claimed that defendants obtained the records before the motion to quash was heard and without authorization or a proper legal basis. Plaintiff sought to enjoin an upcoming Workers’ Compensation Appeals Board trial, asserting that the proceeding violated federal removal law and threatened irreparable harm.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed the action on February 21, 2025, alleging that defendants improperly obtained her medical records and asserting federal and state claims. She filed the motion for temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction on February 24, 2025. The presiding district judge referred the motion to Magistrate Judge Carolyn K. Delaney for findings and recommendations, which recommended denial based on procedural defects and failure to satisfy the requirements for preliminary relief.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- *Granny Goose Foods, Inc. v. Brotherhood of Teamsters*, 415 U.S. 423, 439 (1974)
- *Winter v. Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc.*, 555 U.S. 7, 20 (2008)
- *Stuhlbarg International Sales Co. v. John D. Brush & Co.*, 240 F.3d 832, 839 n.7 (9th Cir. 2001)
- *Alliance for the Wild Rockies v. Cottrell*, 632 F.3d 1127, 1131, 1135 (9th Cir. 2011)
- *Where Do We Go Berkeley v. California Department of Transportation*, 32 F.4th 852, 859 (9th Cir. 2022)
- *Johnson v. Couturier*, 572 F.3d 1067, 1083 (9th Cir. 2009)
- *Flynt Distributing Co. v. Harvey*, 734 F.2d 1389, 1394 (9th Cir. 1984)
- *Tri-Valley CAREs v. U.S. Department of Energy*, 671 F.3d 1113, 1131 (9th Cir. 2012)
- *Nible v. Macomber*, No. 2:24-cv-01259-DJC-CSK-PC, 2024 WL 2133319, at *2 (E.D. Cal. May 13, 2024)
- *United States v. Streich*, 560 F.3d 926, 935 (9th Cir. 2009)
- *Vacek v. United States Postal Service*, 447 F.3d 1248, 1250 (9th Cir. 2006)
- *Kokkonen v. Guardian Life Insurance Co. of America*, 511 U.S. 375, 377 (1994)
- *Caterpillar Inc. v. Williams*, 482 U.S. 386, 392 (1987)
- *Baird v. Bonta*, 81 F.4th 1036, 1044 (9th Cir. 2023)
- *Stormans, Inc. v. Selecky*, 586 F.3d 1109, 1127 (9th Cir. 2009)
- *Brentwood Academy v. Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association*, 531 U.S. 288, 295 (2001)

- Lugar v. Edmondson Oil Co., 457 U.S. 922, 936 (1982)
- Cisco Systems, Inc. v. California Workers’ Compensation Appeals Board, No. C 00-21092 JW, 2001 WL 34780587, at *6 (N.D. Cal. Mar. 28, 2001)
- Turner v. Duncan, 158 F.3d 449, 455 (9th Cir. 1998)
- Martinez v. Ylst, 951 F.2d 1153, 1156-57 (9th Cir. 1991)

OPINION

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 9 FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA 10 11 TAHTIANA JADE BROWN, No. 2:25-cv-00607-DC-CKD (PS) 12
Plaintiff, 13 v. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 14 LUCIDWORKS, et al. 15
Defendants. 16 17 On February 24, 2025, plaintiff Tahtiana Brown filed a motion for a temporary
restraining 18 order and a preliminary injunction.

(ECF No. 3.) The presiding district judge referred the motion 19 to the undersigned for issuance of
these findings and recommendations. (See ECF No. 5.) The 20 motion is appropriate for decision
without oral argument under Local Rule 230(g).

For the 21 reasons set forth below, the motion should be denied. 22 I. Background 23 Plaintiff
initiated this action on February 21, 2025, with a complaint naming several 24 defendants and
bringing claims arising out of harm allegedly suffered from defendants obtaining 25 plaintiff’s
medical records without authorization or proper legal basis. (ECF No. 1.) Specifically, 26 plaintiff
alleges she is a party to a workers compensation case and filed a motion to quash a 27 subpoena
for her medical records in connection with that case.

(Id. at 2-3.) According to plaintiff, 28 before the motion to quash was heard, defendants unlawfully
obtained her medical records. (Id.) 1 The complaint asserts seven causes of action against multiple
defendants as follows: (1) 2 Violation of HIPAA Privacy Act (45 C.F.R. § 164); (2) Violation of
the California’s 3 Confidentiality of Medical Information Act (“CMIA”), California Constitutional
Right to 4 Privacy; (3) Invasion of Privacy; (4) Negligence; (5) Intentional Infliction of Emotional
Distress; 5 (6) Due Process Violation; and (7) Extortion, Retaliation, Racketeering.

(ECF No. 1 at 3-6.) In 6 the complaint, plaintiff seeks damage and injunctive relief requiring
defendants to destroy or 7 return all improperly obtained medical records. (Id. at 6.) 8 On February
24, 2025, plaintiff filed the motion for a temporary restraining order and 9 preliminary injunction
presently before the undersigned. (ECF No. 3.) Plaintiff seeks to enjoin the 10 Workers’
Compensation Appeals Board (WCAB) from proceeding with her upcoming trial, 11 which
plaintiff alleges is “unlawfully continuing despite the filing of a Notice of Removal to this 12
Court under 28 U.S.C. § 1446(d).” (Id. at 1.)

13 II. Legal Standard 14 The purpose of a temporary restraining order under Rule 65(b) of the
Federal Rules of 15 Civil Procedure is to preserve the status quo and to prevent irreparable harm

“so long as is 16 necessary to hold a hearing, and no longer.” *Granny Goose Foods, Inc. v. Bhd. of Teamsters*, 415 U.S. 423, 439 (1974).

In determining whether to issue a temporary restraining order, a court relies 18 on the same factors that guide the evaluation of a request for preliminary injunctive relief: 19 whether the moving party “is likely to succeed on the merits,... likely to suffer irreparable harm 20 in the absence of preliminary relief,... the balance of equities tips in [its] favor, and... an 21 injunction is in the public interest.” *Winter v. Natural Res.*

Def. Council, Inc., 555 U.S. 7, 20 22 (2008); see also *Stuhlbarg Int’l. Sales Co. v. John D. Brush & Co.*, 240 F.3d 832, 839 n.7 (9th 23 Cir. 2001) (stating the analysis for temporary restraining orders and preliminary injunctions is 24 “substantially identical”). 25 Courts within this circuit may also consider a request for a temporary restraining order or 26 preliminary injunction using a “sliding scale” test in which “a stronger showing of one element 27 may offset a weaker showing of another.” *Alliance for the Wild Rockies v. Cottrell*, 632 F.3d 28 1127, 1131 (9th Cir.

2011). “[W]hen plaintiffs establish that the balance of hardships tips sharply 1 in their favor, there is a likelihood of irreparable injury, and the injunction is in the public interest, 2 they need only show ‘serious questions’ on the merits.” *Where Do We Go Berkeley v. California 3 Dep’t of Transp.*, 32 F.4th 852, 859 (9th Cir. 2022) (citing *Alliance for the Wild Rockies*, 632 4 F.3d at 1135).

5 The Eastern District of California's local rules impose specific requirements on those who 6 request a temporary restraining order. See Local Rule 231. Among other things, these rules 7 require “actual notice to the affected party and/or counsel” except in “the most extraordinary of 8 circumstances.” Local Rule 231(a). “Appropriate notice would inform the affected party and/or 9 counsel of the intention to seek a temporary restraining order, the date and time for hearing to be 10 requested ..., and the nature of the relief to be requested.” *Id.* 11 A court may issue a temporary restraining order “without written or oral notice to the 12 adverse party” only if 13 (A) specific facts in an affidavit or a verified complaint clearly show that immediate and irreparable injury, loss, or damage will result to 14 the movant before the adverse party can be heard in opposition; and 15 (B) the movant’s attorney certifies in writing any efforts made to give notice and the reasons why it should not be required.

16 17 Fed. R. Civ. P. 65(b)(1). 18 When deciding whether to issue a temporary restraining order, the court may rely on 19 declarations, affidavits, and exhibits, among other things. See *Johnson v. Couturier*, 572 F.3d 20 1067, 1083 (9th Cir. 2009). This evidence need not conform to the standards that apply at 21 summary judgment or trial. *Id.*; *Flynt Distrib. Co. v. Harvey*, 734 F.2d 1389, 1394 (9th Cir.

1984). 22 III. Analysis 23 As a preliminary matter, plaintiff has not satisfied the requirements of this court's local 24 rule governing applications for temporary restraining orders. First, plaintiff has not filed a brief 25 on all relevant legal issues presented by the motion.

Second, plaintiff has not filed an affidavit in 26 support of the existence of an irreparable injury. Third, plaintiff has not filed an "affidavit 27 detailing notice, or efforts to effect notice to the affected parties or counsel or showing good 28 cause why notice should not be given[.]" Fourth, plaintiff has not filed a proposed order.

The 1 motion for a temporary restraining order is therefore procedurally defective. See Local Rule 231. 2 Plaintiff's failure to comply with the requirements of this court's local rules is sufficient 3 justification to deny the requested temporary restraining order. See *Tri-Valley CAREs v. U.S. 4 Dep't of Energy*, 671 F.3d 1113, 1131 (9th Cir. 2012) ("Denial of a motion as the result of a 5 failure to comply with local rules is well within a district court's discretion."); *Nible v. 6 Macomber*, No. 2:24-cv-01259-DJC-CSK-PC, 2024 WL 2133319, at *2 (E.D.

Cal. May 13, 7 2024) (denying temporary restraining order sought by pro se plaintiff as procedurally deficient). 8 Plaintiff also fails to show the relevant factors support granting preliminary relief. To 9 begin, plaintiff does not establish she is likely to suffer irreparable harm in the absence of this 10 court issuing a temporary restraining order or preliminary injunction.

In support of this factor, 11 plaintiff asserts that if the workers compensation trial moves forward, she will suffer irreparable 12 harm by being forced to litigate "the same claims in two different courts simultaneously" and by 13 potentially "suffering prejudicial rulings in state court that could interfere with the federal 14 proceedings." (ECF No. 3 at 2.)

These allegations are entirely conclusory and not supported by 15 any evidence. Even assuming solely for purposes of this motion that these circumstances could 16 constitute irreparable harm, the court is unable to assess whether plaintiff would be forced to 17 litigate the same or similar claims in two courts simultaneously because she has not provided the 18 court with the name and number of the other case.

19 Plaintiff also does not provide the date of the workers compensation trial she seeks to 20 enjoin or stay, which is a further significant omission for any assessment of irreparable harm. 21 Because the date of the trial plaintiff seeks to enjoin is not specified, this court cannot determine 22 whether irreparable harm will occur in the absence of preliminary relief.

23 Plaintiff asserts she has a likelihood of success on the merits because "the Defendants' 24 insistence on proceeding with the Workers' Compensation trial is in direct violation of federal 25 law." (ECF No. 3 at 2.) And further, "[t]he failure of the Workers' Compensation court to 26 acknowledge [the] removal is a blatant disregard for the federal removal state and a violation of 27 Plaintiff's constitutional rights.

(Id.) 28 //// 1 Plaintiff does not, however, explain why her workers compensation case would be 2 properly removed to this court. To the contrary, section 1445 of the United States Code provides 3 “[a] civil action in any State court arising under the workmen’s compensation laws of such State 4 may not be removed to any district court of the United States.” 28 U.S.C. § 1445(c).

Based on the 5 information available to the court, it appears the case plaintiff describes is non-removable, and 6 her argument that she is likely to succeed on the merits of this case because of disregard of her 7 notice of removal must be rejected. 8 It is, further, not clear from an initial review of plaintiff’s complaint that this court has 9 subject matter jurisdiction over this suit.

The complaint alleges “federal and state privacy 10 statutes” as a basis for subject matter jurisdiction. (ECF No. 1 at 3.) While HIPAA is a federal 11 statute, it creates no private cause of action. See *United States v. Streich*, 560 F.3d 926, 935 (9th 12 Cir. 2009) (“HIPAA does not provide any private right of action”).

In general, federal courts hear 13 only cases that arise in diversity of citizenship or present a federal question. See U.S. CONST. 14 art. III §§ 1–2; 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331-32. The presumption is against jurisdiction and “the burden of 15 establishing the contrary rests upon the party asserting jurisdiction.” *Vacek v. U.S. Postal Serv.*, 16 447 F.3d 1248, 1250 (9th Cir.

2006) (citing *Kokkonen v. Guardian Life Insurance Co. Of 17 America*, 511 U.S. 375, 377 (1994)); see also *Caterpillar Inc. v. Williams*, 482 U.S. 386, 392 18 (1987) (under the well-pleaded complaint rule, “federal jurisdiction exists only when a federal 19 question is presented on the face of the plaintiff’s properly pleaded complaint”). Since HIPAA 20 provides no private cause of action, and the complaint pleads no other basis for subject matter 21 jurisdiction, it is unclear what, if any, federal question is presented by plaintiff’s complaint.1 22 //// 23 1 The complaint also asserts a claim titled “Due Process Violation.” (ECF No. 1 at 5.)

The 24 entirety of this claim is as follows: “Motion to Quash was properly filed and pending. Obtaining the records prematurely violated procedural due process rights as plaintiff was denied opportunity 25 to argue against their release.” (Id.)

As to this alleged conduct, plaintiff’s complaint does not clearly allege State action or a close nexus between the State and the challenged action as 26 necessary to state a claim for a violation of her federal due process rights and thereby present a 27 federal question. See *Brentwood Academy v. Tennessee Secondary Sch. Athletic Ass’n*, 531 U.S. 288, 295 (2001). “[M]ost rights secured by the Constitution are protected only against 28 infringement by governments.” *Lugar v. Edmonson Oil Co.*, 457 U.S. 922, 936 (1982).

1 Plaintiff fails to establish a likelihood of success on the merits, which is the most 2 important Winter factor, and also relevant to the court’s evaluation of the other factors. See *Baird 3 v. Bonta*, 81 F.4th 1036, 1044 (9th Cir. 2023). Without showing a likelihood of success on the 4 merits, or a

likelihood of irreparable harm, plaintiff cannot establish that a temporary restraining order or preliminary injunction is appropriate.

See *Stormans, Inc. v. Selecky*, 586 F.3d 1109, 61127 (9th Cir. 2009) (citing *Winter*, 555 U.S. at 20).² 7 IV. Recommendation 8 In accordance with the above, IT IS HEREBY RECOMMENDED that plaintiff's motion⁹ for a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction (ECF No. 3) be denied.¹⁰ These findings and recommendations are submitted to the United States District Judge¹¹ assigned to the case, pursuant to the provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1).

Within fourteen (14)¹² days after being served with these findings and recommendations, any party may file written¹³ objections with the court and serve a copy on all parties. Such a document should be captioned¹⁴ "Objections to Magistrate Judge's Findings and Recommendations." Any reply to the objections¹⁵ shall be served on all parties and filed with the court within seven (7) days after service of the¹⁶ ¹⁷ ¹⁸ ¹⁹ ²⁰ ²¹ ² The Anti-Injunction Act prohibits federal courts from "grant[ing] an injunction to stay²² proceedings in a State court" subject to several exceptions.

28 U.S.C. § 2283. The proceeding²³ plaintiff seeks to enjoin is before the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board (WCAB). At least one district court has held the Anti-Injunction Act bars issuance of a federal injunction enjoining²⁴ a proceeding before the WCAB because the WCAB is a state court for purposes of the Act. See *Morongo Band of Mission Indians v. Stach*, 951 F. Supp. 1455, 1468 (C.D.

Cal. 1997), order²⁵ vacated on other grounds and appeal dismissed, 156 F.3d 1344 (9th Cir. 1998). At least one other district court has held that a WCAB proceeding is a state administrative proceeding to which the²⁶ Anti-Injunction Act does not apply. See *Cisco Sys., Inc. v. California Workers' Comp. Appeals Bd.*, No. C 00-21092 JW, 2001 WL 34780587, at *6 (N.D.

Cal. Mar. 20, 2001). Because there are multiple other deficiencies in plaintiff's application for preliminary relief, this court need not²⁸ determine whether the Anti-Injunction Act also prohibits the requested relief.¹ | objections. Failure to file objections within the specified time may waive the right to appeal the² || District court's order. *Turner v. Duncan*, 158 F.3d 449, 455 (9th Cir.

1998); *Martinez v. Ylst*, 951³ | F.2d 1153, 1156-57 (9th Cir. 1991).⁴ | Dated: February 26, 2025
fale } it | / } a a CAROLYN K DELANEY⁶ UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE⁷ 8,
brow25ev0607.tro⁹ 10 1] 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28