

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
VIRGINIA, ROANOKE DIVISION

Joshua Adam Hurley v. RN K. Corbin, et al.

Hurley v. Corbin, No. 7:24-cv-00605 (W.D. Va. Mar. 9, 2026) · No. 7:24-cv-00605 · Decided March 9, 2026

SUMMARY

The court denied Joshua Adam Hurley’s motion to amend his 42 U.S.C. § 1983 complaint. It held that the proposed medical-treatment claims were futile because the allegations did not plausibly establish deliberate indifference under the Fourteenth Amendment, and that the remaining claims were improperly joined under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 20. The court also denied as unnecessary a separate motion to remove individuals from a claim.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia, Roanoke Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Michael F. Urbanski
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia, Roanoke Division
DECIDED	March 9, 2026
DOCKET	7:24-cv-00605
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff moved to amend his 42 U.S.C. § 1983 complaint after the court previously dismissed claims without prejudice for failure to state a claim and dismissed other claims without prejudice under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 21. The court denied the proposed amendment as futile and improperly joined.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A motion to amend under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 15(a)(2) should ordinarily be freely granted, but leave may be denied for prejudice, bad faith, futility, or improper joinder. An amendment is futile if the proposed claim would not survive a motion to dismiss under the plausibility standard.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished, nonprecedential district-court memorandum opinion

TOPICS

motion to amend

joinder

civil procedure

prisoners rights

due process

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

prisoner civil rights

constitutional law

health law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether leave to amend should be denied as futile when the proposed medical-treatment claims would not survive a motion to dismiss.
2. Whether the proposed claims against different jail officials were improperly joined under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 20 because they arose from unrelated transactions and presented different factual and legal issues.
3. Whether the separate motion to remove three individuals from a claim should be denied as unnecessary when those individuals were not named as defendants in the proposed amended complaint and had no pending claims against them.

HOLDINGS

1. Leave to amend may be denied as futile when the proposed claims would not survive a motion to dismiss. Hurley's claims concerning Suboxone, hepatitis C treatment, and crushed Wellbutrin did not plausibly allege that the defendants knew or should have known of an unjustifiably high risk of harm or that Hurley suffered resulting harm.
2. Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 20 does not permit a plaintiff to join unrelated claims against different defendants in one action. Claims involving different transactions, defendants, and factual issues must be pursued in separate actions.
3. A motion to remove individuals from a claim is unnecessary when those individuals are not defendants in the proposed amended complaint and have no pending claims against them.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A proposed amendment is futile when it is clearly insufficient or frivolous on its face . . . [or] if the claim it presents would not survive a motion to dismiss.” (Section II)

“The rule does not permit prisoners or any other litigants to join unrelated claims against different parties in one lawsuit.” (Section III.B)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Hurley, an inmate and apparently pretrial detainee during the relevant events, alleged inadequate medical treatment involving Suboxone, hepatitis C, and crushed Wellbutrin. He also alleged unrelated conduct involving administrative segregation, a Christian common-fare diet, placement near an inmate on his enemy list, and enforcement of a disciplinary violation. The court found that the medical allegations did not plausibly establish deliberate indifference or resulting harm and that the remaining claims involved different defendants, transactions, and factual issues.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Hurley, a pro se inmate, filed a civil-rights action against employees of the New River Valley Regional Jail and repeatedly sought to amend his complaint. On July 16, 2025, the court dismissed some claims without prejudice for failure to state a claim and other claims without prejudice under Rule 21, while permitting Hurley to seek reopening with a proposed amended complaint to cure specified deficiencies and directing that improperly joined claims be pursued separately. Hurley filed a proposed amended complaint docketed as a motion to amend, and separately filed a motion to remove three people from a claim. The court denied both motions, concluding that the medical-treatment claims were futile and the remaining claims were improperly joined.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- *ACA Fin. Guar. Corp. v. City of Buena Vista*, 917 F.3d 206, 217-18 (4th Cir. 2019)
- *Save Our Sound OBX, Inc. v. N.C. Dep't of Transp.*, 914 F.3d 213, 228 (4th Cir. 2019)
- *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- *Kingsley v. Hendrickson*, 576 U.S. 389, 398 (2015)
- *Short v. Hartman*, 87 F.4th 593, 611-12 (4th Cir. 2023)
- *United States v. Naum*, 134 F.4th 234, 237 (4th Cir. 2025)
- *United States v. Brizuela*, 962 F.3d 784, 787 (4th Cir. 2020)
- *Tardif v. City of New York*, 991 F.3d 394, 405 (2d Cir. 2021)
- *Hale v. Harrison Cnty. Bd. of Supervisors*, 8 F.4th 399, 404 n.† (5th Cir. 2021)
- *Burger v. Bloomberg*, 418 F.3d 882, 883 (8th Cir. 2005)
- *Wright v. Collins*, 766 F.2d 841, 849 (4th Cir. 1985)
- *Black v. Ala. Dep't of Corr.*, 578 F. App'x 794, 796 (11th Cir. 2014)
- *Whiting v. Kelly*, 255 F. App'x 896, 899 (5th Cir. 2007)
- *Mims v. Simon*, No. 1:22-cv-00323, 2022 WL 1284106, at *3 (W.D. Mich. Apr. 29, 2022)
- *Powers v. Mathena*, No. 7:20-cv-00520, 2021 WL 371688, at *2 (W.D. Va. Feb. 3, 2021)
- *Sykes v. Bayer Pharms. Corp.*, 548 F. Supp. 2d 208, 218 (E.D. Va. 2008)
- *Allah v. Smith*, No. 2:22-cv-00021, 2022 WL 4395680, at *4 (S.D. Ohio Sept. 23, 2022)
- *Courthouse News Serv. v. Schaefer*, 2 F.4th 318, 325 (4th Cir. 2021)
- *George v. Smith*, 507 F.3d 605, 607 (7th Cir. 2007)
- *Owens v. Hinsley*, 635 F.3d 950, 952 (7th Cir. 2011)