

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Uriel Garcia v. Powell, et al.

Garcia v. Powell · No. 1:19-cv-01631-KES-CDB (PC) · Decided April 23, 2025

SUMMARY

This document contains findings and recommendations from the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California in a 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action alleging deliberate indifference to serious medical needs in violation of the Eighth Amendment. The magistrate judge recommends granting summary judgment to Defendants Powell, Hurtado, and Ugwueze, concluding that Plaintiff did not provide evidence establishing a genuine dispute of material fact regarding their medical responses or processing of treatment requests.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	April 23, 2025
DOCKET	1:19-cv-01631-KES-CDB (PC)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Findings and recommendations by a magistrate judge recommending that the district judge grant defendants' motion for summary judgment in a prisoner civil-rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Summary judgment is proper when there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. The nonmoving party must produce evidence of specific facts showing a genuine, material dispute; mere allegations, speculation, or lack of information are insufficient. Evidence and reasonable inferences are viewed in favor of the nonmoving party.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Uriel Garcia v. Powell, Hurtado, Ugwueze

TOPICS

- prisoners rights
- section 1983
- cruel and unusual punishment
- summary judgment
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

prisoner civil rights

constitutional law

civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether defendants were entitled to summary judgment on Garcia's Eighth Amendment deliberate-indifference claims.
2. Whether Garcia produced evidence creating a genuine dispute of material fact regarding Powell's response to his finger injury.
3. Whether Garcia produced evidence creating a genuine dispute of material fact regarding Hurtado's processing of orthopedic requests and Ugwueze's approval of those requests.
4. Whether defendants' qualified-immunity defense required resolution.

HOLDINGS

1. Summary judgment should be granted where the moving party establishes the absence of a genuine dispute of material fact and the opposing party fails to produce competent evidence supporting a material, genuine factual dispute.
2. Powell was entitled to summary judgment because the undisputed evidence showed that she examined Garcia, consulted medical providers, provided treatment and pain medication, arranged an x-ray, and advised follow-up, while Garcia produced no evidence that she purposefully ignored or unreasonably responded to his medical needs.
3. Hurtado was entitled to summary judgment because she processed the high-priority orthopedic requests on the days she received them, forwarded them for approval and scheduling, and had no inmate-patient encounters of the type alleged by Garcia.
4. Ugwueze was entitled to summary judgment because he approved the high-priority requests on the days received, was not responsible for scheduling the specialty services, was not shown to have modified the medical order, and had no knowledge of a scheduling problem.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Summary judgment is appropriate when it is demonstrated that there “is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law.”” (at 2)

“To maintain an Eighth Amendment claim based on medical care in prison, a plaintiff must first “show a serious medical need by demonstrating that failure to treat a prisoner’s condition could result in further significant injury or the unnecessary and wanton infliction of pain.” (at 4)

“This Court finds Defendants Powell, Hurtado, and Ugwueze are entitled to summary judgment on Plaintiff’s claims of deliberate indifference to serious medical needs and will recommend Defendants’ motion be granted.” (at 17)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Garcia, a California state prisoner, injured a finger in late December 2018 or early January 2019. Nurse Powell examined him twice, provided buddy tape and pain medication, consulted medical personnel, and arranged for an x-ray. After a high-priority orthopedic request was submitted on January 22, 2019, Nurse Hurtado processed it the same day and Ugwueze approved it; a later surgical request was likewise processed and approved on February 20, 2019, followed by corrective surgery on February 27, 2019. Garcia offered no competent evidence creating a genuine dispute that any defendant purposefully ignored or unreasonably responded to a serious medical need.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Garcia filed a second amended complaint asserting Eighth Amendment deliberate-indifference claims against Powell, Hurtado, and Ugwueze. The action was initially dismissed for failure to state a claim, but the Ninth Circuit reversed and remanded for further proceedings on the deliberate-indifference claims. Defendants then moved for summary judgment, and the magistrate judge recommended granting the motion and entering judgment for defendants, subject to review by the assigned district judge under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1).

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Celotex Corp. v. Catrett, 477 U.S. 317, 322 (1986)
- Matsushita Elec. Indus. Co. v. Zenith Radio Corp., 475 U.S. 574, 586-87 & n.11 (1986)
- Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc., 477 U.S. 242, 248, 255 (1986)
- T.W. Elec. Serv., Inc. v. Pacific Elec. Contractors Ass'n, 809 F.2d 626, 630-31 (9th Cir. 1987)
- Wool v. Tandem Computers, Inc., 818 F.2d 1433, 1436 (9th Cir. 1987)
- Orr v. Bank of America, NT & SA, 285 F.3d 764, 772 (9th Cir. 2002)
- Richards v. Nielsen Freight Lines, 602 F. Supp. 1224, 1244-45 (E.D. Cal. 1985), aff'd, 810 F.2d 898, 902 (9th Cir. 1987)
- Estelle v. Gamble, 429 U.S. 97, 104 (1976)
- Peralta v. Dillard, 744 F.3d 1076, 1081-82 (9th Cir. 2014)
- Jett v. Penner, 439 F.3d 1091, 1096 (9th Cir. 2006)
- McGuckin v. Smith, 974 F.2d 1050, 1059-60 (9th Cir. 1992)
- WMX Technologies, Inc. v. Miller, 104 F.3d 1133 (9th Cir. 1997) (en banc)
- Wilhelm v. Rotman, 680 F.3d 1113, 1122 (9th Cir. 2012)
- Colwell v. Bannister, 763 F.3d 1060, 1066 (9th Cir. 2014)
- Lopez v. Smith, 203 F.3d 1122, 1131 (9th Cir. 2000)
- Farmer v. Brennan, 511 U.S. 825, 835, 837, 847 (1994)
- Whitley v. Albers, 475 U.S. 312, 319 (1986)
- Toguchi v. Chung, 391 F.3d 1051, 1057, 1060 (9th Cir. 2004)

- Gibson v. County of Washoe, Nevada, 290 F.3d 1175, 1188 (9th Cir. 2002)
- Hallett v. Morgan, 296 F.3d 732, 746 (9th Cir. 2002)
- Nelson v. Pima Community College, 83 F.3d 1075, 1081-82 (9th Cir. 1996)
- Coverdell v. Department of Social & Health Services, 834 F.2d 758, 762 (9th Cir. 1987)
- Burch v. Regents of University of California, 433 F. Supp. 2d 1110, 1119 (E.D. Cal. 2006)
- Wilkerson v. Wheeler, 772 F.3d 834, 839 (9th Cir. 2014)

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