

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
MICHIGAN, SOUTHERN DIVISION

Gary Lentz v. MDOC et al.

Lentz · No. 2:24-CV-10198-TGB-KGA · Decided February 10, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan adopts a magistrate judge’s report and recommendation in Gary Lentz’s prisoner civil-rights action. The court overrules Lentz’s objections, holds that his claims were not exhausted through appeals of involuntary-treatment hearing decisions, and concludes that Perttu v. Richards does not require a jury trial where exhaustion is undisputed. Several defendants are dismissed without prejudice for failure to exhaust, Wellpath is dismissed based on bankruptcy discharge, and the case continues against the remaining defendants.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Terrence G. Berg
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan
DECIDED	February 10, 2026
DOCKET	2:24-CV-10198-TGB-KGA
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Order adopting a magistrate judge's report and recommendation on defendants' motions for summary judgment and motion to dismiss, overruling the plaintiff's objections, dismissing certain defendants without prejudice for failure to exhaust administrative remedies, dismissing Wellpath based on bankruptcy discharge, and allowing the action to continue against the remaining defendants.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	De novo review of the portions of the report and recommendation to which specific objections are made under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); the court reviewed the unobjected-to portions for clear error or otherwise accepted the recommendation. Summary judgment remains appropriate when there is no genuine dispute of material fact.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential district court opinion

PARTIES

Gary Lentz v. Michigan Department of Corrections, Heidi Washington, Scott Webster, Rusch, Spencer, Hernandez, Cohill, Caporuscio, Nguyen, Sanders, Amalfitano, Miller, White, Lisa Bailey, Wellpath Inc., Aleksandra Wilanowski

TOPICS

summary judgment

prisoners rights

civil procedure

motions to dismiss

bankruptcy

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

prisoner civil rights

bankruptcy

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the plaintiff's objections to the magistrate judge's report and recommendation should be considered despite being filed after the fourteen-day deadline.
2. Whether appeals from a Hearing Committee decision concerning involuntary treatment exhaust a Michigan prisoner's claims without proceeding through the ordinary MDOC grievance process.
3. Whether *Perttu v. Richards* required a jury trial or otherwise precluded summary judgment on PLRA exhaustion under the circumstances presented.
4. Whether the magistrate judge's recommendations to grant or partially grant defendants' motions and dismiss specified defendants should be adopted.

HOLDINGS

1. The court may address untimely objections because the objection deadline is procedural rather than jurisdictional, and the court may excuse compliance in the interests of justice.
2. A Michigan prisoner must exhaust challenges to involuntary-treatment-committee hearings through the ordinary MDOC three-step grievance process; an appeal of the Hearing Committee's decision alone does not exhaust the claims.
3. *Perttu v. Richards* does not require a jury trial or preclude summary judgment when the exhaustion issue is not intertwined with the merits and there is no genuine dispute of material fact concerning exhaustion.
4. The MDOC defendants' motion for summary judgment was granted in part and denied in part; specified defendants were dismissed without prejudice for failure to exhaust, Wellpath's motion to dismiss was granted based on bankruptcy discharge, and Bailey's motion for summary judgment was granted.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"A Michigan prisoner exhausts his administrative remedies by timely proceeding through a three-step grievance process." (PageID.1514)

"Here, however, the issue of exhaustion is not intertwined with Plaintiff's claims." (PageID.1520)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Lentz, a Michigan prisoner, alleged that prison and corporate defendants improperly medicated him and failed to treat resulting injuries, violating his civil rights. He contended that appeals from a Hearing Committee decision concerning involuntary treatment exhausted his claims. The court concluded that those appeals did not substitute for the ordinary three-step Michigan Department of Corrections grievance process and found no genuine dispute concerning exhaustion as to the dismissed defendants.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Lentz filed a civil-rights action against individual defendants, the Michigan Department of Corrections, and Wellpath Inc. The MDOC defendants and Lisa Bailey moved for summary judgment based on failure to exhaust administrative remedies, while Wellpath moved to dismiss based on bankruptcy discharge. Magistrate Judge Kimberly G. Altman recommended partial resolution of the MDOC defendants' motion, dismissal of Wellpath, and dismissal of Bailey without prejudice. Although Lentz's objections were untimely, the district court considered them, overruled them, adopted the report and recommendation, and entered the specified dismissals.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Ghaster v. City of Rocky River, 913 F. Supp. 2d 443, 452 (N.D. Ohio 2012)
- Thomas v. Arn, 474 U.S. 140, 150 (1985)
- Pfahler v. Nat'l Latex Prods. Co., 517 F.3d 816, 829 (6th Cir. 2008)
- Miller v. Currie, 50 F.3d 373, 380 (6th Cir. 1995)
- Cole v. Yukins, 7 Fed. App'x 354, 356 (6th Cir. 2001)
- Bosley v. 21 WFMJ Television, Inc., 245 F. App'x 445, 450 (6th Cir. 2007)
- Peterson v. Polavarapu, No. 21-1827, 2023 WL 11715293, at *3 (6th Cir. Nov. 22, 2023)
- Perttu v. Richards, 605 U.S. 460, 465, 468 (2025)
- Herod v. King, No. 22-086, 2025 WL 2298969, at *5 (N.D. Tex. Aug. 8, 2025)