

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF
PENNSYLVANIA

Edward Johnson v. Medical Doctor Malhi, et al.

Johnson v. Malhi · No. 1:22-cv-01048 · Decided January 12, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania granted summary judgment to the defendants in Edward Johnson’s prisoner civil rights action alleging deliberate indifference and Pennsylvania medical malpractice arising from the delayed diagnosis of an H. pylori infection. The court held that the medical providers’ extensive treatment and testing did not establish deliberate indifference and that the malpractice claim failed for lack of expert testimony and because res ipsa loquitur did not apply. The court also deemed Johnson’s sanctions motion withdrawn for failure to file a supporting brief and closed the case.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Yvette Kane
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania
DECIDED	January 12, 2026
DOCKET	1:22-cv-01048
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendants moved for summary judgment in a prisoner's § 1983 deliberate-indifference and Pennsylvania medical-malpractice action. Plaintiff also moved for sanctions.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Summary judgment is appropriate when the movant shows that there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. The court views the facts and reasonable inferences in favor of the nonmoving party, but unsupported allegations and conclusory responses do not create a genuine dispute.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential

TOPICS

- section 1983
- prisoners rights
- medical malpractice
- summary judgment
- sanctions

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights

prisoner litigation

medical malpractice

civil procedure

bankruptcy stay

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the prison medical defendants acted with deliberate indifference to Johnson's serious medical needs by allegedly failing to timely diagnose his H. pylori infection.
2. Whether Defendant Lynch was entitled to summary judgment on Johnson's Pennsylvania medical-malpractice claim because Johnson presented no expert testimony and could not invoke res ipsa loquitur.
3. Whether Johnson's motion for sanctions should be deemed withdrawn under Local Rule 7.5 for failure to file a supporting brief.

HOLDINGS

1. The defendants were entitled to summary judgment because the undisputed evidence showed that they provided prompt and extensive treatment, testing, and referrals for Johnson's symptoms, and therefore did not act with deliberate indifference to a serious medical need.
2. Defendant Lynch was entitled to summary judgment because Johnson offered no expert testimony and the alleged failure to timely diagnose an H. pylori infection was not within the narrow res ipsa loquitur exception to the expert-testimony requirement.
3. Johnson's motion for sanctions was deemed withdrawn because he failed to file a supporting brief within fourteen days.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Based on the undisputed evidence of record, the Court finds that the Defendants are entitled to summary judgment with respect to Johnson’s deliberate indifference claim.” (Section V.A)

“There is clearly not a “sufficient fund of common knowledge” among lay people as to how and when H. Pylori infections must be diagnosed to permit an inference of negligence without expert testimony.” (Section V.B)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Johnson was incarcerated at SCI-Huntingdon and experienced gastrointestinal symptoms, including abdominal pain, bloating, difficulty burping, nausea, weight loss, and difficulty eating, beginning in May 2020. Prison medical personnel repeatedly examined him, prescribed medications and nutritional supplements, ordered laboratory tests and an EKG, and referred him for outside gastroenterological evaluation. An H. pylori infection was diagnosed in April 2022 and treated with antibiotics. Johnson presented no expert testimony supporting his deliberate-indifference or malpractice claims.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Johnson filed the action in June 2022, alleging that prison medical personnel failed to timely diagnose his H. pylori infection. The court dismissed official-capacity claims, claims against nonmedical defendants, and the

negligence claim against Malhi and Nalley for failure to file a certificate of merit. After discovery, defendants moved for summary judgment. The case was stayed and administratively closed because of Wellpath LLC's bankruptcy, then reopened after confirmation of Wellpath's Chapter 11 plan. The court deemed Johnson's sanctions motion withdrawn, granted summary judgment to the defendants, and closed the case.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc., 477 U.S. 242, 247-48, 248, 257 (1986)
- Gray v. York Newspapers, Inc., 957 F.2d 1070, 1078 (3d Cir. 1992)
- Brenner v. Local 514, United Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners of America, 927 F.2d 1283, 1287-88 (3d Cir. 1991)
- Moore v. Tartler, 986 F.2d 682 (3d Cir. 1993)
- Clement v. Consolidated Rail Corp., 963 F.2d 599, 600 (3d Cir. 1992)
- White v. Westinghouse Electric Co., 862 F.2d 56, 59 (3d Cir. 1988)
- Celotex Corp. v. Catrett, 477 U.S. 317, 323-24 (1986)
- Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. v. Zenith Radio, 475 U.S. 574, 586 (1986)
- Harter v. G.A.F. Corp., 967 F.2d 846, 851 (3d Cir. 1992)
- Sanders v. Beard, No. 09-cv-01384, 2010 WL 2853261, at *5 (M.D. Pa. July 20, 2010)
- Thomas v. Norris, No. 02-cv-01854, 2006 WL 2590488, at *4 (M.D. Pa. Sept. 8, 2006)
- Pappas v. City of Lebanon, 331 F. Supp. 2d 311, 315 (M.D. Pa. 2004)
- Gonzaga University v. Doe, 536 U.S. 273, 284-85 (2002)
- Harvey v. Plains Township Police Department, 421 F.3d 185, 189 (3d Cir. 2005)
- West v. Atkins, 487 U.S. 42, 48 (1988)
- Natale v. Camden County Correctional Facility, 318 F.3d 575, 582 (3d Cir. 2003)
- Rouse v. Plantier, 182 F.3d 192, 197 (3d Cir. 1999)
- Monmouth County Correctional Institutional Inmates v. Lanzaro, 834 F.2d 326, 346-47 (3d Cir. 1987)
- Farmer v. Brennan, 511 U.S. 825, 837 (1994)
- Inmates of Allegheny County Jail v. Pierce, 612 F.2d 754, 762 (3d Cir. 1979)
- Estelle v. Gamble, 429 U.S. 97, 105-06 (1976)
- Quinby v. Plumsteadville Family Practice, Inc., 907 A.2d 1061, 1070-72 (Pa. 2006)
- Toogood v. Owen J. Rogal, D.D.S., P.C., 824 A.2d 1140, 1145 (Pa. 2003)

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