

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
OHIO

David Goodykoontz v. State of Ohio, et al.

Goodykoontz · No. 1:25-cv-01724 · Decided December 10, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio dismissed pro se prisoner David Goodykoontz’s complaint under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e) and 1915A. The court held that allegations concerning inadequate or harmful treatment for Tourette syndrome did not plausibly establish deliberate indifference under the Eighth Amendment, and that the allegations of discrimination and denial of protective custody were conclusory. The court also certified that an appeal could not be taken in good faith.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Pamela A. Barker
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio
DECIDED	December 10, 2025
DOCKET	1:25-cv-01724
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Pro se prisoner civil-rights complaint screened before service under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e) and 1915A.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e) and 1915A, the court must dismiss a complaint before service if it is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary relief from an immune defendant. The failure-to-state-a-claim standard is the plausibility standard of Ashcroft v. Iqbal and Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, applied to pro se pleadings with liberal construction.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished

TOPICS

- prisoners rights
- cruel and unusual punishment
- section 1983
- pleadings
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint stated a plausible Eighth Amendment deliberate-indifference claim based on allegedly inadequate or harmful medical treatment.
2. Whether the complaint stated any other plausible federal claim based on conclusory allegations of discrimination or the warden's refusal to place plaintiff in protective custody.
3. Whether the complaint was subject to dismissal during statutory screening under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e) and 1915A.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint failed to state a plausible Eighth Amendment deliberate-indifference claim because, even assuming an objectively serious medical need, the allegations did not plausibly show that any defendant possessed the required subjective state of mind or consciously disregarded a substantial risk of harm.
2. The complaint failed to state any other plausible federal claim because the allegations of discrimination and the warden's refusal to place plaintiff in protective custody were purely conclusory and did not satisfy basic pleading requirements.
3. The complaint was dismissed before service for failure to state a plausible claim upon which relief could be granted under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e) and 1915A.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Deliberate indifference is characterized by obduracy or wantonness – it cannot be predicated on negligence, inadvertence, or good faith error.” (2)

“federal courts are generally reluctant to second guess medical judgments” (2)

“so woefully inadequate as to amount to no treatment at all.” (2)

“Pro se plaintiffs must still meet basic pleading requirements, and courts are not required to “conjure allegations” or create claims on their behalf.” (3)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Goodykoontz alleged that defendants failed to properly treat his Tourette's syndrome while he was incarcerated in Ohio. He claimed that defendants prescribed antidepressants, including SSRIs and Wellbutrin, that were ineffective or worsened his tics, refused to change the medications, and failed to provide treatment for his verbal and physical tics. He also alleged that an unknown warden refused to allow him to enter protective custody, but provided no specific factual allegations connecting the defendants to an actionable constitutional violation.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

David Goodykoontz, an Ohio inmate proceeding pro se and in forma pauperis, filed a federal prisoner civil-rights complaint against the State of Ohio, Cuyahoga County, MetroHealth, and four unknown defendants. The

court screened the complaint under the statutory provisions applicable to in forma pauperis and prisoner actions and dismissed it for failure to state a plausible federal claim. The court also certified that any appeal could not be taken in good faith.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Hill v. Lappin, 630 F.3d 468, 470-71 (6th Cir. 2010)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662 (2009)
- Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544 (2007)
- Estelle v. Gamble, 429 U.S. 97, 104 (1976)
- Farmer v. Brennan, 511 U.S. 825, 828 (1994)
- Reilly v. Vadlamudi, 680 F.3d 617, 624 (6th Cir. 2012)
- Jones v. Muskegon Cty., 625 F.3d 935, 941 (6th Cir. 2010)
- Jennings v. Al-Dabagh, 97 F. App'x 548, 549-50 (6th Cir. 2004)
- Westlake v. Lucas, 537 F.2d 857, 860 n. 5 (6th Cir. 1976)
- Williams v. Curtin, 631 F.3d 380, 383 (6th Cir. 2011)
- Pilgrim v. Littlefield, 92 F.3d 413, 416 (6th Cir. 1996)
- Erwin v. Edwards, 22 F. App'x 579, 580 (6th Cir. 2001)
- Lillard v. Shelby County Bd. of Educ., 76 F.3d 716, 726 (6th Cir. 1996)

OPINION

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO
David Goodykoontz, Case No. 1:25 cv 1724 Plaintiff, -vs- JUDGE PAMELA A. BARKER State
of Ohio, et al., MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER Defendant. Background Pro se
Plaintiff David Goodykoontz, an Ohio inmate, has filed a federal prisoner civil rights complaint in
this case against the State of Ohio, Cuyahoga County, MetroHealth, and four “unknown”
Defendants.

He states he sues Defendants “for damages for discrimination and deliberate indifference to [his] serious medical need, or similar.” (Doc. No. 1 at 6, ¶1.) His complaint fails to set forth clear specific factual allegations underlying his claims and with respect to each Defendant.

The basis for his complaint is that “Defendants” failed to properly treat him for Tourettes while incarcerated in Ohio and prescribed him antidepressant medication (including SSRIs and Wellbutrin) that was either ineffective or led to or exacerbated his Tourettes. (See id. at 6-7.) He complains that “Defendants refused to take [him] off the SSRIs and put him on another type of antidepressant and refused to give him any treatment for his verbal and physical tics.” (Id. at 7.)

In addition, he states he sues “Unknown Defendant 4, the Warden of the Lorain Correctional Institution... for failing to allow [him] to go into PC, where plaintiff is a federal agent,” and that he “has extensive damages from such refusal.” (Id. at 7, ¶2.) Standard of Review Because Plaintiff is proceeding in forma pauperis and seeks redress from governmental defendants, his complaint is subject to review under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e) and 1915A.

Those statutes require the Court to review his complaint, and to dismiss it before service if the Court determines that it is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim upon which he may be granted relief, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. See *Hill v. Lappin*, 630 F.3d 468, 470–71 (6th Cir. 2010).

To survive a dismissal for failure to state a claim, a pro se “complaint must contain sufficient factual matter, accepted as true, to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.” *Hill*, 630 F.3d at 471 (holding that the dismissal standard articulated in *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662 (2009) and *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544 (2007) governs dismissals for failure to state a claim under §§ 1915(e) and 1915A).

Discussion Upon review, the Court finds that Plaintiff’s complaint must be dismissed pursuant to §§ 1915(e) and 1915A. Failure to provide adequate medical treatment to a prisoner violates the Eighth Amendment’s prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment only when it results from “deliberate indifference” to the prisoner’s serious medical needs. *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 104 (1976).

To state a constitutional Eighth Amendment deliberate indifference claim, a prisoner must demonstrate both objective and subjective components. He must demonstrate that he had a medical condition that posed a “substantial risk of serious harm” to him (the objective component), and, that a defendant prison official acted with deliberate indifference to that risk (the subjective component).

Farmer v. Brennan, 511 U.S. 825, 828 (1994). “Deliberate indifference is characterized by obduracy or wantonness – it cannot be predicated on negligence, inadvertence, or good faith error.” *Reilly v. Vadlamudi*, 680 F.3d 617, 624 (6th Cir. 2012).

Thus, to prove the subjective component of a claim, “a plaintiff must show that [a prison] official: (1) subjectively knew of a risk to the inmate’s health, (2) drew the inference that a substantial risk of harm to the inmate existed, and (3) consciously disregarded that risk.” *Jones v. Muskegon Cty.*, 625 F.3d 935, 941 (6th Cir. 2010). It is well- established that allegations of medical malpractice or negligent diagnosis and treatment fail to state a constitutional deliberate indifference claim.

Jennings v. Al-Dabagh, 97 Fed. App’x 548, 549-50 (6th Cir. 2004). Here, even assuming Plaintiff’s allegations are sufficient to demonstrate he had an objectively serious medical need, his allegations are insufficient to support a plausible inference that any Defendant prison employee or

official had the subjective state of mind with respect to his care required to demonstrate constitutional “deliberate indifference.” Further, it is clear from Plaintiff’s pleading that he has been provided medical care but contends the treatment he has been provided is inadequate, even harmful to him, and that he has been prescribed inappropriate antidepressant medications.

But where, as here, a prisoner has received some medical care or treatment, and the dispute is over the adequacy of such treatment, “federal courts are generally reluctant to second guess medical judgments” unless the medical treatment provided is “so woefully inadequate as to amount to no treatment at all.” *Westlake v. Lucas*, 537 F.2d 857, 860 n. 5 (6th Cir.

1976). Plaintiff’s allegations do not support a plausible finding that the care he has been provided is “so woefully inadequate as to amount to no treatment at all.” Accordingly, Plaintiff’s complaint fails to state a plausible federal constitutional claim for “deliberate indifference” against any Defendant with respect to his medical care (even assuming his allegations may be sufficient to support a claim for negligence or medical malpractice under state tort law).

Plaintiff’s complaint also fails to state any other plausible federal claim upon which he may be granted relief. To the extent he alleges unlawful “discrimination” or that the Warden of the Lorain Correctional Institution is liable to him “for failing to allow [him] to go into PC,” his allegations are purely conclusory and fail to meet basic pleading requirements necessary to state a claim in federal claim.

Pro se pleadings are entitled to liberal construction, see *Williams v. Curtin*, 631 F.3d 380, 383 (6th Cir. 2011), but such principles are not without limits. See *Pilgrim v. Littlefield*, 92 F.3d 413, 416 (6th Cir. 1996). Pro se plaintiffs must still meet basic pleading requirements, and courts are not required to “conjure allegations” or create claims on their behalf.

Erwin v. Edwards, 22 F. App’x 579, 580 (6th Cir. 2001). See also *Lillard v. Shelby County Bd. of Educ.*, 76 F.3d 716, 726 (6th Cir. 1996) (in the context of a civil rights claim, conclusory allegations of unconstitutional conduct are insufficient to state a claim). Conclusion Accordingly, for the foregoing reasons, Plaintiff’s complaint is dismissed for failure to state a plausible claim upon which he may be granted relief in accordance with 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e) and 1915A.

The Court further certifies, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3), that an appeal from this decision could not be taken in good faith. IT IS SO ORDERED. s/Pamela A. Barker PAMELA A. BARKER Date: December 10, 2025 U. S. DISTRICT JUDGE 4