

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

A.G., a minor, by and through her guardian ad litem, et al. v. County
of Tulare, et al.

A.G. v. County of Tulare · No. 1:23-cv-00500-JLT-SKO · Decided October 23, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California denied without prejudice the parties’ stipulation to amend the complaint to substitute California Forensic Medical Group for a previously named Doe defendant. The court found that the stipulation did not conclusively establish consent by all defendants under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 15(a)(2), and set November 10, 2025, as the deadline for amendments unless further time was granted.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Sheila K. Oberto
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	October 23, 2025
DOCKET	1:23-cv-00500-JLT-SKO
DISPOSITION	denied without prejudice
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiffs submitted a stipulation seeking leave to file a third amended complaint substituting California Forensic Medical Group for a previously named Doe defendant. The court denied the stipulation without prejudice because it could not determine that all defendants had consented to the amendment.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 15(a)(2) to determine whether the proposed amendment had the required written consent or court leave.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district-court order; precedential status not stated
PARTIES	A.G., a minor, by and through her guardian ad litem, et al. v. County of Tulare, et al.

TOPICS

motion to amend

pleadings

civil procedure

bankruptcy

injunctions

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

bankruptcy

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the stipulation satisfied Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 15(a)(2)'s requirement of written consent from all defendants for amendment of the complaint.
2. Whether the court should deny the stipulation without prejudice because the document did not conclusively establish that all defendants consented to the amendment.

HOLDINGS

1. Under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 15(a)(2), amendment by stipulation requires the written consent of all opposing defendants; signatures alone are insufficient when the stipulation does not purport to be made on behalf of all defendants.
2. The court denied the stipulation to amend without prejudice and permitted plaintiffs either to submit a compliant stipulation with all defendants' consent or to file a motion to amend.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Rule 15(a)(2) requires that a party obtain “the opposing party’s written consent or the court’s leave.”” (at 2)

“In light of this inconsistency the Court finds the stipulation deficient as the Court cannot conclusively determine that all defendants have consented to amendment.” (at 2)

“If Plaintiffs wish to amend their complaint, they must obtain the consent of all defendants and submit a stipulation that addresses the Court’s concerns above.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiffs sought to amend their complaint to substitute California Forensic Medical Group for a Doe defendant. The proposed amendment also implicated Wellpath-related entities and a bankruptcy-court injunction concerning claims against Wellpath Holdings, Inc. and affiliated debtors. The stipulation included signatures from all defendants, but its recitations did not identify all defendants as parties to the stipulation and expressly stated that Wellpath, LLC was not a party.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The parties filed a joint status report stating that plaintiffs intended to seek leave to amend by stipulation or motion. Plaintiffs then filed a stipulation to substitute California Forensic Medical Group as a defendant. Although the stipulation contained signatures from every defendant, its text did not purport to be on behalf of all defendants, and the court denied it without prejudice.

DISPOSITION

denied without prejudice

CASES CITED

- In re Wellpath Holdings, Inc., No. 24-90533 (S.D. Tex. Bank.) (Doc. 2907)
- Anderson v. Cnty. of Fresno, No. 121CV01134ADASAB, 2023 WL 7130607, at *1 (E.D. Cal. Oct. 30, 2023)

OPINION

G.

PER CURIAM.

1 2 3 4 5

6 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

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EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

8 9 A.G., a minor, by and through her guardian ad Case No. 1:23-cv-00500-JLT-SKO litem, et al.

10 ORDER DENYING STIPULATION TO

AMEND WITHOUT PREJUDICE

11 Plaintiff, (Doc. 79) 12 v. 13 County of Tulare, et al., 14 Defendant. 15

_____/ 16 17 The Court is in receipt of the parties’
“Stipulation for the Filing by Plaintiffs of a Third 18 Amended Complaint Substituting in
California Forensic Medical Group for One Previously 19 Named Doe Defendant.” (Doc. 79). 20
The Court makes the following observations: 21 1. While Defendants Wellpath, LLC and Andrew
P. Ho are listed as signatories of the 22 stipulation, neither defendant is listed as a party to the
stipulation in the recitations. 23 (Id.) Indeed, the stipulation explicitly states that Wellpath, LLC is
not a party to the 24 stipulation. (Id. at 1 n.1). 25 2. On June 4, 2025, the Bankruptcy Court for the
Southern District of Texas entered an 26 order permanently enjoining all claims and causes of
action against Wellpath 27 Holdings, Inc. and its affiliated debtors. In re Wellpath Holdings, Inc.,
No. 24-90533 28 (S.D. Tex. Bank.) (Doc. 2907). 1 3. The June 4, 2025 order instructs “[h]olders
of personal injury tort and wrongful death 2 Claims against [Wellpath, LLC and associated
debtors]” that they are “subject to the 3 Trust Distribution Procedures . . . including the non-
binding alternative dispute 4 resolution process . . . to determine, if necessary, the allowed amount
for their 5 Claim.” (See id. at 2) That order also provides that 6 Such holders of personal injury
tort and wrongful death claims may also seek determinations of the Debtors’ liability by the
appropriate civil court pursuant 7 to 28 U.S.C. § 157(b)(5) with the Liquidating Trust as a nominal
party (a) to the extent such inclusion is necessary to recover against available third-party 8
insurance proceeds or an unreleased Non-Debtor Defendant, or (b) to establish or liquidate the
amount of their claim for distribution under the Plan 9 from the Liquidating Trust; provided,
however, outside of the Pro Rata distribution from the Liquidating Trust as well as recovery from

any 10 applicable insurance plan, the Holders of such claims may not seek satisfaction of, and are permanently enjoined from seeking payment of, any 11 judgment, award, settlement, claim, distribution, indemnification right, or any other payment amount resulting from their lawsuit from, or in connection 12 with, the Debtors, the Debtors' estates, or the Post-Restructuring Debtors.) 13 (See id.) 14 4. On July 23, 2025, the parties filed a "Joint Status Report," in which Plaintiff's 15 represented that they would "seek leave by stipulation or motion to file an amended 16 complaint that: (1) substitutes Defendant Wellpath, LLC with the Liquidating Trust 17 as a nominal party; and (2) joins CFMG as a required party, Fed. R. Civ. P. 19, 18 substituting CFMG for a DOE Defendant." (Doc. 78 at 4). Defendant Wellpath, 19 LLC noted its opposition to such a substitution, stating that it was not "necessary or 20 appropriate" as it would be premature in light of the non-binding alternative dispute 21 resolution process. (Id. at 4–5). Defendant Wellpath, LLC also represented that it 22 was their view that "Plaintiff must first complete the ADR process or obtain express 23 agreement from counsel for the Liquidating Trust in order to proceed against the 24 debtor entity or Liquidating Trust in this litigation without violating the Bankruptcy 25 Court's injunction." (Id. at 5).

26 Rule 15(a)(2) requires that a party obtain "the opposing party's written consent or the court's 27 leave." This rule requires all defendants' written consent to the amendment. See *Anderson v. 28 Cnty. of Fresno*, No. 121CV01134ADASAB, 2023 WL 7130607, at *1 (E.D. Cal. Oct. 30, 2023). 1 Here, while the stipulation includes the signatures of every defendant, the stipulation itself does 2 not purport to be on behalf of all defendants. In light of this inconsistency the Court finds the 3 stipulation deficient as the Court cannot conclusively determine that all defendants have consented 4 to amendment. Therefore, the Court will deny the stipulation without prejudice. 5 If Plaintiffs wish to amend their complaint, they must obtain the consent of all defendants 6 and submit a stipulation that addresses the Court's concerns above. If the parties determine that 7 it would be inappropriate for Defendant Wellpath, Inc. to participate in such a stipulation in light 8 of the injunction, the parties may consider whether substitution or dismissal of Wellpath, Inc. may 9 be appropriate. Alternatively, Plaintiffs' may file a motion to amend pursuant to Federal Rule of 10 Civil Procedure 15(a)(1). 11 It is therefore ORDERED that the "Stipulation for the Filing by Plaintiffs of a Third 12 Amended Complaint Substituting in California Forensic Medical Group for One Previously 13 Named Doe Defendant," (Doc. 79), is DENIED without prejudice. The Court further ORDERS 14 that any amendments to pleadings are to be filed no later than November 10, 2025, unless further 15 time is sought and granted by this Court. 16 IT IS SO ORDERED. 17 18 Dated: October 23, 2025 /s/ Sheila K. Oberto .

UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

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