

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Roger E. Clark v. Benjamin Denton Schnieder, et al.

Roger E. Clark v. Benjamin Denton Schnieder, et al. · No. 2:25-cv-2929-JDP (P) · Decided December 4, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California screens a state prisoner’s 42 U.S.C. § 1983 complaint alleging Eighth Amendment violations arising from changes to cardiac treatment and alleged misdiagnosis. The court dismisses the complaint with leave to amend because it does not adequately identify each defendant’s responsibility or the physical injury resulting from allegedly denied cardiology appointments. The court grants the plaintiff’s application to proceed in forma pauperis and allows thirty days to amend or voluntarily dismiss the action.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Jeremy D. Peterson
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	December 4, 2025
DOCKET	2:25-cv-2929-JDP (P)
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Initial screening of a state prisoner's pro se 42 U.S.C. § 1983 complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court screened the complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, accepting the plausibility standard under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a)(2) and dismissing claims that are frivolous, malicious, fail to state a claim, or seek relief from an immune defendant.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Nonprecedential district court screening order
PARTIES	Roger E. Clark v. Benjamin Denton Schnieder, Tracy Patterson, Lori Green

TOPICS

- section 1983
- prisoners rights
- pleadings
- civil procedure
- constitutional law

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

civil rights

prisoner litigation

constitutional law

health law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint stated a cognizable claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 sufficient to proceed past mandatory prisoner screening.
2. Whether the complaint adequately identified what each defendant did, the legal theory and relief sought, and the physical injury allegedly caused by denied cardiology appointments.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint failed to state a cognizable claim and was dismissed with leave to amend.
2. Plaintiff was granted leave to file an amended complaint addressing the identified deficiencies within thirty days.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A complaint must contain a short and plain statement that plaintiff is entitled to relief, Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a) (2), and provide “enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face,” Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007).” (at 1)

“Complaints should be dismissed where “one cannot determine from the complaint who is being sued, for what relief, and on what theory.”” (at 1)

“Plaintiff’s complaint, ECF No. 1, is DISMISSED with leave to amend.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff is a state prisoner who alleged that he suffers from chronic heart failure and uses a pacer. He claimed that defendants, healthcare providers at the California Medical Facility, violated his Eighth Amendment rights in 2024 by changing his cardiac treatment and misdiagnosing his cardiac condition. He also alleged that certain cardiology appointments were denied, but did not specify the physical injury caused by the missed appointments or the responsibility of each defendant.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed a civil-rights complaint alleging that healthcare providers at the California Medical Facility violated his Eighth Amendment rights by changing his cardiac treatment and misdiagnosing his cardiac condition. The court screened the complaint, found that it did not adequately identify each defendant's responsibility or allege the physical injury resulting from missed cardiology appointments, dismissed the complaint with leave to amend, and granted plaintiff's application to proceed in forma pauperis.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678-79 (2009)
- Kobold v. Good Samaritan Reg'l Med. Ctr., 832 F.3d 1024, 1038 (9th Cir. 2016)
- Nagrampa v. MailCoups, Inc., 469 F.3d 1257, 1264 n.2 (9th Cir. 2006) (en banc)
- Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972) (per curiam)
- Hayes v. Idaho Corr. Ctr., 849 F.3d 1204, 1208 (9th Cir. 2017)
- Bruns v. Nat'l Credit Union Admin., 122 F.3d 1251, 1257 (9th Cir. 1997)
- Ivey v. Bd. of Regents, 673 F.2d 266, 268 (9th Cir. 1982)
- McHenry v. Renne, 84 F.3d 1172, 1178 (9th Cir. 1996)
- Lacey v. Maricopa Cnty., 693 F.3d 896, 907 n.1 (9th Cir. 2012) (en banc)

OPINION

Schnieder

PER CURIAM.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

9 FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

10 11 ROGER E. CLARK, Case No. 2:25-cv-2929-JDP (P) 12 Plaintiff, 13 v. ORDER

14 BENJAMIN DENTON SCHNIEDER, et

al., 15 Defendants. 16 17 18 Plaintiff, a state prisoner, brings this section 1983 action against healthcare providers 19 Benjamin Denton Schnieder, Tracy Patterson, and Lori Green at the California Medical Facility 20 ("CMF"). His claims against the defendants are inadequate to proceed past screening and are 21 dismissed with leave to amend. Plaintiff's application to proceed in forma pauperis, ECF No. 2, 22 makes the required showing and is granted. 23 Screening and Pleading Requirements 24 A federal court must screen a prisoner's complaint that seeks relief against a governmental 25 entity, officer, or employee. See 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a). The court must identify any cognizable 26 claims and dismiss any portion of the complaint that is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a 27 claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is 28 immune from such relief. See 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915A(b) (1), (2). 1 A complaint must contain a short and plain statement that plaintiff is entitled to relief, 2 Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2), and provide "enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its 3 face," Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007). The plausibility standard does not 4 require detailed allegations, but legal conclusions do not suffice. See Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 5 662, 678 (2009). If the allegations "do not permit the court to infer more than the mere 6 possibility of misconduct," the complaint states no claim. Id. at 679. The complaint need not 7 identify "a precise legal theory." Kobold v. Good Samaritan Reg'l Med. Ctr., 832 F.3d 1024, 8 1038 (9th Cir. 2016). Instead, what plaintiff must state is a "claim"—a set of "allegations that 9

give rise to an enforceable right to relief.” *Nagrampa v. MailCoups, Inc.*, 469 F.3d 1257, 1264 10 n.2 (9th Cir. 2006) (en banc) (citations omitted). 11 The court must construe a pro se litigant’s complaint liberally. See *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972) (per curiam). The court may dismiss a pro se litigant’s complaint “if it 13 appears beyond doubt that the plaintiff can prove no set of facts in support of his claim which 14 would entitle him to relief.” *Hayes v. Idaho Corr. Ctr.*, 849 F.3d 1204, 1208 (9th Cir. 2017). 15 However, “‘a liberal interpretation of a civil rights complaint may not supply essential elements 16 of the claim that were not initially pled.’” *Bruns v. Nat’l Credit Union Admin.*, 122 F.3d 1251, 17 1257 (9th Cir. 1997) (quoting *Ivey v. Bd. of Regents*, 673 F.2d 266, 268 (9th Cir. 1982)). 18 Analysis 19 Plaintiff alleges that he suffers from chronic heart failure and uses a pacer to support his 20 health. ECF No. 1 at 4. He claims that defendants violated his Eighth Amendment rights in 2024 21 when they changed his cardiac treatment and misdiagnosed his cardiac condition. *Id.* at 5. He 22 fails, however, to indicate what responsibility each of the named defendants bears for that alleged 23 violation of his rights. Complaints should be dismissed where “one cannot determine from the 24 complaint who is being sued, for what relief, and on what theory.” *McHenry v. Renne*, 84 F.3d 25 1172, 1178 (9th Cir. 1996). Additionally, while plaintiff alleges that the change in his treatment 26 plan caused him injury and when certain cardiologist appointments were denied, he fails to 27 indicate what physical injury he suffered because of these missed appointments. *Id.* 28 1 Plaintiff may file an amended complaint that addresses these deficiencies. He is advised 2 | that the amended complaint will supersede the current complaint. See *Lacey v. Maricopa Cnty.*, 3 | 693 F.3d 896, 907 n.1 (9th Cir. 2012) (en banc). The amended complaint should be titled “First 4 | Amended Complaint” and refer to the appropriate case number. 5 Accordingly, it is ORDERED that: 6 1. Plaintiff’s complaint, ECF No. 1, is DISMISSED with leave to amend. 7 2. Plaintiff’s application to proceed in forma pauperis, ECF No. 2, is GRANTED. 8 3. Within thirty days from service of this order, plaintiff shall file either (1) an amended 9 | complaint or (2) notice of voluntary dismissal of this action without prejudice. 10 4. Failure to timely file either an amended complaint or notice of voluntary dismissal may 11 } result in the imposition of sanctions, including a recommendation that this action be dismissed 12 || with prejudice pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b). 13 5. The Clerk of Court shall send plaintiff a complaint form with this order. 14 1s IT IS SO ORDERED. 16 | q Sty — Dated: _ December 4, 2025 q———

17 JEREMY D. PETERSON

18 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28