

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
WISCONSIN

Jovan Williams v. Rebecca Young, Nicholas Roen, Brittany Hibma,
Shane Hinton, Bowyn Wilson, Gina Strehlow, Officer Sullivan,
Officer Krasovek, Officer Genske, Officer Rewey, Officer Morgan,
and Dr. English

Williams · No. 25-cv-252-jdp · Decided February 17, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin grants defendants’ motion for partial summary judgment in Jovan Williams’s action concerning prison staff’s response to his suicide attempt and subsequent medical care. The court holds that Williams failed to exhaust his administrative remedies for claims concerning the failure to use soft restraints because his initial grievance did not fairly notify prison officials of those claims. The restraints-related claims are dismissed without prejudice, while the case proceeds against certain defendants on claims concerning the failure to prevent the overdose and provide prompt medical care.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin
WRITING FOR THE COURT	James D. Peterson
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin
DECIDED	February 17, 2026
DOCKET	25-cv-252-jdp
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendants moved for partial summary judgment on the ground that plaintiff failed to exhaust administrative remedies for claims concerning the defendants' alleged failure to place him in soft restraints while he was hospitalized after a medication overdose.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Summary judgment; defendants bore the burden of proving failure to exhaust administrative remedies as an affirmative defense.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court opinion

TOPICS

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prisoners rights

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section 1983

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights

prisoner litigation

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Williams exhausted his administrative remedies for claims based on defendants' alleged failure to place him in soft restraints after his overdose.
2. Whether raising the restraints issue for the first time in an appeal of the institutional grievance constituted proper exhaustion under Wisconsin's inmate grievance procedures.

HOLDINGS

1. Williams did not exhaust his administrative remedies because his grievance did not fairly notify prison officials that he was asserting a separate claim concerning the failure to use soft restraints.
2. Raising the restraints issue for the first time in an administrative appeal did not properly exhaust the claim because Wisconsin regulations require issues to be raised initially at the institution level.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The key question is whether the prisoner’s grievance provided “prison officials a fair opportunity to address his complaint.”” (Analysis)

“Williams wrote that he was complaining about how prison staff responded to his overdose, so prison officials would have had no reason to know that he was also complaining about prison staff’s failure to use soft restraints.” (Analysis)

“Dismissals for failure to exhaust are always without prejudice” (Conclusion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Williams alleged that prison staff failed to promptly respond to his threats of suicide and failed to provide adequate medical care after he attempted suicide by overdosing on medication. He also alleged that defendants refused to place him in soft restraints while he was hospitalized after the overdose, even though they knew his restraints were causing injury to his wrists and ankles. In his institutional grievance, Williams described staff's response to the overdose and mentioned that he had been left in tight restraints, but he did not identify restraint-related injuries or otherwise present the restraints issue as a separate complaint.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Jovan Williams filed claims under the Eighth Amendment and Wisconsin negligence law concerning prison staff's response to his suicide attempt and subsequent medical care. Defendants moved for partial summary judgment on the restraint-related claims, and Gina Strehlow moved to join that motion. The court granted both motions, dismissed the restraint claims without prejudice, dismissed the affected defendants from the case, and allowed the remaining claims to proceed.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Pozo v. McCaughtry, 286 F.3d 1022, 1025 (7th Cir. 2002)
- Cannon v. Washington, 418 F.3d 714, 718 (7th Cir. 2005)
- Burrell v. Powers, 431 F.3d 282, 284-85 (7th Cir. 2005)
- Woodford v. Ngo, 548 U.S. 81, 88-89 (2006)
- Davis v. Mason, 881 F.3d 982, 985 (7th Cir. 2018)
- Compton v. Cox, No. 12-cv-837-jdp, 2017 WL 933152, at *6 (W.D. Wis. Mar. 8, 2017)
- Riccardo v. Rausch, 375 F.3d 521, 524 (7th Cir. 2004)
- Schillinger v. Kiley, 954 F.3d 990, 995 (7th Cir. 2020)
- Strong v. David, 297 F.3d 646, 650 (7th Cir. 2002)
- Jackson v. Esser, 105 F.4th 948 (7th Cir. 2024)
- Maddox v. Love, 655 F.3d 709, 722 (7th Cir. 2011)
- Page v. Inmate Call Sols., No. 21-cv-761-WMC, 2023 WL 7408089 (W.D. Wis. Nov. 9, 2023)
- Berg v. Babcock, No. 18-cv-842-jdp, 2020 WL 869170, at *2 (W.D. Wis. Feb. 21, 2020)
- Ford v. Johnson, 362 F.3d 395, 401 (7th Cir. 2004)

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