

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF KANSAS

Ryan Christopher Cheatham v. Andrew Dedeke, et al.

Cheatham v. Dedeke · No. 5:22-cv-03132-TC · Decided March 31, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Kansas granted summary judgment to jail employees in Ryan Cheatham’s 42 U.S.C. § 1983 deliberate-indifference claim concerning treatment and proposed surgery for a finger injury. The court held that Cheatham failed to properly exhaust available administrative remedies and, alternatively, failed to show a constitutional violation under the applicable deliberate-indifference standard. Cheatham’s motion for summary judgment was denied, and his motion for an order was denied as moot.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Kansas
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Toby Crouse
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Kansas
DECIDED	March 31, 2026
DOCKET	5:22-cv-03132-TC
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Cross-motions for summary judgment in a 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action alleging deliberate indifference to serious medical needs.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Summary judgment is proper when 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 evidence and draws reasonable inferences in favor of the nonmoving party. On qualified immunity, the plaintiff bears the burden of showing both a constitutional violation and that the right was clearly established.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court memorandum and order; persuasive rather than binding outside the case
PARTIES	Ryan Christopher Cheatham v. Judith Beck, Andrew Dedeke, Melissa Wardrop

TOPICS

section 1983

prisoners rights

qualified immunity

summary judgment

fourteenth amendment

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights

constitutional law

prisoner civil rights

health law

civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Cheatham exhausted all available administrative remedies before bringing his § 1983 claim concerning medical care at the jail.
2. Whether the defendants were entitled to qualified immunity because the evidence did not establish a constitutional violation for deliberate indifference to a serious medical need.
3. Whether Cheatham was entitled to summary judgment on his deliberate-indifference claim.

HOLDINGS

1. Cheatham failed to exhaust available administrative remedies because he did not appeal his grievances to the Jail Commander as required by the Leavenworth County jail grievance procedure.
2. The defendants were entitled to qualified immunity because Cheatham did not produce evidence that their conduct violated the Constitution; therefore, the court did not need to decide whether the right was clearly established.
3. Cheatham was not entitled to summary judgment because the evidence did not establish deliberate indifference and instead showed repeated medical evaluations and treatment.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The uncontroverted evidence establishes that Cheatham failed to exhaust his administrative remedies at the Leavenworth County jail.”

“Simply put, Forker did not mandate surgery for Cheatham’s finger.”

“On this record, Cheatham’s claim fails because he lacks any evidence showing that any one of the individual defendants knew about and then consciously disregarded excessive risks to his health or safety.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Cheatham injured his right pinky finger during booking at the Leavenworth County jail on May 18, 2022. Jail medical personnel evaluated him repeatedly, obtained imaging, prescribed medication and exercises, and ultimately arranged an MRI and specialist consultations; the MRI indicated a possible flexor-tendon tear, and a surgeon explained reconstructive surgery without mandating that it occur immediately. Cheatham was transferred to the Kansas Department of Corrections on April 1, 2023, without having undergone surgery, and he had not appealed the denial of his jail grievances to the Jail Commander.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Cheatham, formerly a pretrial detainee at the Leavenworth County jail, filed a § 1983 action against jail employees alleging deliberate indifference to his medical needs. His other claims were dismissed, and the court previously denied defendants' motion to dismiss the deliberate-indifference claim because Cheatham had alleged that a surgeon mandated surgery. The parties then filed cross-motions for summary judgment. The court denied Cheatham's motion, granted defendants' motions, and denied Cheatham's separate motion for an order as moot.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Adler v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., 144 F.3d 664 (10th Cir. 1998)
- Brown v. Perez, 835 F.3d 1223 (10th Cir. 2016)
- Allen v. Muskogee, Okla., 119 F.3d 837 (10th Cir. 1997)
- Scott v. Harris, 550 U.S. 372 (2007)
- Celotex Corp. v. Catrett, 477 U.S. 317 (1986)
- Savant Homes, Inc. v. Collins, 809 F.3d 1133 (10th Cir. 2016)
- Atl. Richfield Co. v. Farm Credit Bank Wichita, 226 F.3d 1138 (10th Cir. 2000)
- United States v. Dep't of Health & Env't, 162 F.4th 1238 (10th Cir. 2025)
- Porter v. Nussle, 534 U.S. 516 (2002)
- Patsy v. Bd. of Regents of Fla., 457 U.S. 496 (1982)
- Wilwording v. Swenson, 404 U.S. 249 (1971)
- Woodford v. Ngo, 548 U.S. 81 (2006)
- Thomas v. Parker, 609 F.3d 1114 (10th Cir. 2010)
- Jernigan v. Stuchell, 304 F.3d 1030 (10th Cir. 2002)
- McCoy v. Meyers, 887 F.3d 1034 (10th Cir. 2018)
- Estrada v. Smart, 107 F.4th 1254 (10th Cir. 2024)
- Anderson v. Creighton, 483 U.S. 635 (1987)
- Harlow v. Fitzgerald, 457 U.S. 800 (1982)
- Pearson v. Callahan, 555 U.S. 223 (2009)
- Messerschmidt v. Millender, 565 U.S. 535 (2012)
- White v. Pauly, 580 U.S. 73 (2017)
- Malley v. Briggs, 475 U.S. 335 (1986)
- City of Tahlequah v. Bond, 595 U.S. 9 (2021)
- Rivas-Villegas v. Cortesluna, 595 U.S. 1 (2021)
- Ashcroft v. al-Kidd, 563 U.S. 731 (2011)
- Wise v. Caffey, 72 F.4th 1199 (10th Cir. 2023)
- Garcia v. Salt Lake Cnty., 768 F.2d 303 (10th Cir. 1985)

- Strain v. Regalado, 977 F.3d 984 (10th Cir. 2020)
- Estelle v. Gamble, 429 U.S. 97 (1976)
- Paugh v. Uintah Cnty., 47 F.4th 1139 (10th Cir. 2022)
- Lamb v. Norwood, 895 F.3d 756 (10th Cir. 2018)
- Requena v. Roberts, 893 F.3d 1195 (10th Cir. 2018)
- McCowan v. Morales, 945 F.3d 1276 (10th Cir. 2019)
- Kansas Penn Gaming, LLC v. Collins, 656 F.3d 1210 (10th Cir. 2011)
- Self v. Crum, 439 F.3d 1227 (10th Cir. 2006)

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