

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS

Devonte Willis v. Monica Carpenter, et al.

Willis · No. 23 C 50375 · Decided March 16, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois grants summary judgment to medical and administrative defendants in a prisoner’s 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action. The court holds that the plaintiff failed to show deliberate indifference under the Eighth Amendment because defendants provided ongoing medical monitoring, antibiotics, pain medication, referrals, and emergency treatment for infections and foreign objects in his knee.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Iain D. Johnston
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois
DECIDED	March 16, 2026
DOCKET	23 C 50375
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Prisoner civil-rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 alleging deliberate indifference to serious medical needs; all defendants moved for summary judgment.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Summary judgment is appropriate when there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and the moving party is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. The court viewed the evidence and reasonable inferences under the Rule 56 standard and concluded that no reasonable jury could find deliberate indifference.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court memorandum opinion; nonprecedential
PARTIES	Devonte Willis v. Monica Carpenter, et al.

TOPICS

- prisoners rights
- section 1983
- cruel and unusual punishment
- summary judgment
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights

constitutional law

prisoner medical care

civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Defendant Mershon was deliberately indifferent to Willis's serious medical needs by allegedly delaying outside referral, selecting ineffective antibiotics, failing to provide preferred pain medication, or otherwise providing constitutionally inadequate care.
2. Whether the IDOC administrative defendants were deliberately indifferent by failing to intervene after receiving Willis's complaints about his pain treatment.
3. Whether defendants were entitled to summary judgment on Willis's Eighth Amendment medical-care claims.

HOLDINGS

1. Defendant Mershon was entitled to summary judgment because the undisputed record showed repeated examinations, wound care, antibiotics, pain treatment, referrals, and emergency treatment, rather than deliberate indifference.
2. The IDOC administrative defendants were entitled to summary judgment because they knew Willis was receiving medical care, had no authority to prescribe or alter his treatment, and reasonably deferred to medical professionals.
3. Summary judgment was proper because no reasonable jury could find that any defendant was deliberately indifferent to Willis's medical needs.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“To prevail on a claim that his medical care violated the Eighth Amendment, Plaintiff must establish two elements: (1) he suffered from an objectively serious medical condition and (2) the defendants were deliberately indifferent to that condition.”

“To show deliberate indifference, “a plaintiff must establish that [the] official knows of and disregards an excessive risk to inmate health or safety or that the official is both aware of facts from which the inference could be drawn that a substantial risk of serious harm exists, and he draws the inference.””

“The Constitution guarantees . . . treatment within the applicable standard of care, not a specific outcome.”

“A prisoner is “not entitled to his preferred set of medications and treatments” so long as his medical providers “did not act recklessly.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Willis repeatedly inserted copper wires and other metallic foreign bodies into an opening in his left knee, resulting in infections, pain, swelling, and drainage. Prison medical staff treated him with wound care, multiple antibiotics, pain medications, referrals, and emergency hospitalization; outside providers ultimately removed the foreign bodies and his knee healed with normal function. Willis continued to report pain and complained to

administrative officials that his pain treatment was inadequate, but those officials had only administrative roles and deferred to medical providers.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Willis sued medical and administrative personnel at Dixon Correctional Center under the Eighth Amendment. After discovery, Defendant Mershon and the IDOC Defendants moved for summary judgment. The court granted both motions, dismissed the action with prejudice, and directed that judgment enter separately for defendants.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Rivera v. Guevara, 319 F. Supp. 3d 1004, 1018 (N.D. Ill. 2018)
- Smith v. Lamz, 321 F.3d 680, 683 (7th Cir. 2003)
- Coleman v. Goodwill Indus. of Se. Wis., Inc., 423 F. App'x 642, 643 (7th Cir. 2011)
- Gray v. Hardy, 826 F.3d 1000, 1005 (7th Cir. 2016)
- Johnson v. Cambridge Indus., Inc., 325 F.3d 892, 898 (7th Cir. 2003)
- Adickes v. S.H. Kress & Co., 398 U.S. 144, 160 (1970)
- Estelle v. Gamble, 429 U.S. 97, 104 (1976)
- Lockett v. Bonson, 937 F.3d 1016, 1022 (7th Cir. 2019)
- Arnett v. Webster, 658 F.3d 742, 750 (7th Cir. 2011)
- Johnson v. Dominguez, 5 F.4th 818, 825 (7th Cir. 2021)
- Rasho v. Jeffreys, 22 F.4th 703, 710 (7th Cir. 2022)
- McDaniel v. Syed, 115 F.4th 805, 832 (7th Cir. 2024)
- Whiting v. Wexford Health Sources, Inc., 839 F.3d 658, 664 (7th Cir. 2016)
- White v. Woods, 48 F.4th 853, 862 (7th Cir. 2022)
- Johnson v. Rimmer, 936 F.3d 695, 707 (7th Cir. 2019)
- Riley v. Waterman, 126 F.4th 1287, 1295 (7th Cir. 2025)
- Petties v. Carter, 836 F.3d 722, 728 (7th Cir. 2016) (en banc)
- Kyles v. Williams, 679 F. App'x 497, 499-500 (7th Cir. 2017)
- Wilson v. Adams, 901 F.3d 816, 821-22 (7th Cir. 2018)
- Norfleet v. Webster, 439 F.3d 392, 396 (7th Cir. 2006)
- Lewis v. Sood, 126 F.4th 525, 531-32 (7th Cir. 2025)
- Page v. Obaisi, 318 F. Supp. 3d 1094, 1104 (N.D. Ill. 2018)
- Johnson v. Dominguez, 5 F.4th 818, 826 (7th Cir. 2021)
- Allen v. Frank, 246 F. App'x 388, 391 (7th Cir. 2007)

- *Weaver v. Champion Petfoods USA Inc.*, 3 F.4th 927, 934 (7th Cir. 2021)
- *Siegel v. Shell Oil Co.*, 612 F.3d 932, 937 (7th Cir. 2010)
- *Cuesta v. Barker*, 738 F. App'x 882, 885 (7th Cir. 2018)
- *Hatcher v. Jones*, No. 25-1432, 2026 WL 268250, at *2 (7th Cir. Feb. 2, 2026)
- *Broadfield v. Williams*, 768 F. App'x 544, 549 (7th Cir. 2019)
- *Garza v. Wexford Health Sources, Inc.*, No. 19-2321, 2022 WL 3443775, at *10 (C.D. Ill. July 18, 2022)
- *Snipes v. DeTella*, 95 F.3d 586, 592 (7th Cir. 1996)
- *Arce v. Wexford Health Sources, Inc.*, 75 F.4th 673, 681 (7th Cir. 2023)
- *Leiser v. Hoffman*, No. 20-2908, 2021 WL 3028147, at *3 (7th Cir. July 19, 2021)
- *Turner v. Paul*, 953 F.3d 1011, 1016 (7th Cir. 2020)
- *Lyke v. Lank*, No. 21 C 50066, 2024 WL 3904630, at *7 (N.D. Ill. Aug. 22, 2024)
- *Wells v. Dominguez*, No. 3:17-cv-50087, 2022 WL 17718421, at *6 (N.D. Ill. Dec. 15, 2022)
- *Burks v. Raemisch*, 555 F.3d 592, 596 (7th Cir. 2009)
- *Greeno v. Daley*, 414 F.3d 645, 656 (7th Cir. 2005)
- *Johnson v. Snyder*, 444 F.3d 579, 586 (7th Cir. 2006)
- *Hayes v. Snyder*, 546 F.3d 516, 527 (7th Cir. 2008)