

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN**

WARREN D. SUGGS,

Plaintiff,

v.

JEANIE M. KRAMER, DR. JAMES
MURPHY, and RANDALL HEPP,

Defendants.

Case No. 24-CV-1427-JPS

ORDER

Plaintiff Warren D. Suggs, an inmate confined at Oshkosh Correctional Institution, filed a pro se complaint under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 alleging that Defendants violated his constitutional rights by failing to provide him adequate medical treatment. On February 10, 2025, the Court screened the complaint, found that it failed to state a claim, and allowed Plaintiff the opportunity to file an amended complaint. ECF No. 12. On February 14, 2025, Plaintiff filed an amended complaint. ECF No. 13. This Order screens Plaintiff's amended complaint.

1. FEDERAL SCREENING STANDARD

Under the Prison Litigation Reform Act, the Court must screen complaints brought by prisoners seeking relief from a governmental entity or an officer or employee of a governmental entity. 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a). The Court must dismiss a complaint if the prisoner raises claims that are legally "frivolous or malicious," that fail to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or that seek monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b).

In determining whether a complaint states a claim, the Court applies the same standard that applies to dismissals under Federal Rule of Civil

Procedure 12(b)(6). See *Cesal v. Moats*, 851 F.3d 714, 720 (7th Cir. 2017) (citing *Booker-El v. Superintendent, Ind. State Prison*, 668 F.3d 896, 899 (7th Cir. 2012)). A complaint must include “a short and plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2). The complaint must contain enough facts, accepted as true, to “state a claim for relief that is plausible on its face.” *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (quoting *Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007)). “A claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows a court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged.” *Id.* (citing *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 556).

To state a claim for relief under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, a plaintiff must allege that someone deprived him of a right secured by the Constitution or the laws of the United States and that whoever deprived him of this right was acting under the color of state law. *D.S. v. E. Porter Cnty. Sch. Corp.*, 799 F.3d 793, 798 (7th Cir. 2015) (citing *Buchanan–Moore v. County of Milwaukee*, 570 F.3d 824, 827 (7th Cir. 2009)). The Court construes pro se complaints liberally and holds them to a less stringent standard than pleadings drafted by lawyers. *Cesal*, 851 F.3d at 720 (citing *Perez v. Fenoglio*, 792 F.3d 768, 776 (7th Cir. 2015)).

2. PLAINTIFF’S ALLEGATIONS

Plaintiff brings his amended complaint against Defendants Jeanie M. Kramer (“Kramer”), Dr. James Murphy (“Murphy”), and (former) Warden Randall Hepp (“Hepp”) for their deliberate indifference to his serious medical needs. ECF No. 13 at 2–3. In October 2018, Plaintiff was diagnosed with significant diabetic retinopathy. *Id.* at 3. As a result of his evaluation, Plaintiff began treatment for this issue at Stanley Correctional Institution. *Id.* at 2–3. Plaintiff was transferred to Columbia Correctional Institution in

October 2021, but he still continued to receive his needed medical treatment. *Id.* at 3.

Plaintiff was transferred to Waupun Correctional Institution in June 2022. *Id.* In July 2022, Plaintiff made Defendants aware of his serious medical need and that he had been receiving treatments for diabetic retinopathy. *Id.* Plaintiff informed Defendants that the failure to receive this treatment could result in vision impairment and ultimately blindness. *Id.* Despite being aware of Plaintiff's medical needs and the serious risk to his eyesight, Defendants failed to provide him adequate treatment. *Id.* As a result, Plaintiff suffered permanent damage to his vision that could have been prevented. *Id.*

3. ANALYSIS

The Court finds that Plaintiff may proceed against Defendants Kramer, Murphy, and Hepp on an Eighth Amendment deliberate indifference claim for their indifference to Plaintiff's serious medical need. The Eighth Amendment secures an inmate's right to medical care. Prison officials violate this right when they "display deliberate indifference to serious medical needs of prisoners." *Greeno v. Daley*, 414 F.3d 645, 652 (7th Cir. 2005) (internal quotation omitted). Deliberate indifference claims contain both an objective and a subjective component: the inmate "must first establish that his medical condition is objectively, 'sufficiently serious,'; and second, that prison officials acted with a 'sufficiently culpable state of mind,' i.e., that they both knew of and disregarded an excessive risk to inmate health." *Lewis v. McLean*, 864 F.3d 556, 562–63 (7th Cir. 2017) (quoting *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 825, 834 (1994) (internal citations omitted)). Deliberate indifference requires "[s]omething more than negligence or even malpractice." *Pyles v. Fahim*, 771 F.3d 403, 409 (7th Cir. 2014).

At the screening stage, the Court finds that Plaintiff's allegations are sufficient to proceed against Kramer, Murphy, and Hepp. Plaintiff alleges that he informed Defendants of his serious medical need and the risk to his eyesight if not properly treated. Plaintiff alleges that Defendants failed to provide adequate treatment and that he suffered permanent eye damage as a result. At the pleading stage, the Court finds that Plaintiff may proceed against Kramer, Murphy, and Hepp on an Eighth Amendment deliberate indifference claim for their indifference to Plaintiff's serious medical needs.

4. CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, the Court finds that Plaintiff may proceed on the following claim pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b):

Claim One: Eighth Amendment claim against Kramer, Murphy, and Hepp for their deliberate indifference to Plaintiff's serious medical needs.

Defendant should take note that, within forty-five (45) days of service of this Order, they are to file a summary judgment motion that raises all exhaustion-related challenges. The Court will issue a scheduling order after counsel is secured that embodies other relevant deadlines.

Accordingly,

IT IS ORDERED that under an informal service agreement between the Wisconsin Department of Justice and this Court, a copy of the amended complaint and this Order have been electronically transmitted to the Wisconsin Department of Justice for service on Defendants **Kramer, Murphy, and Hepp**;

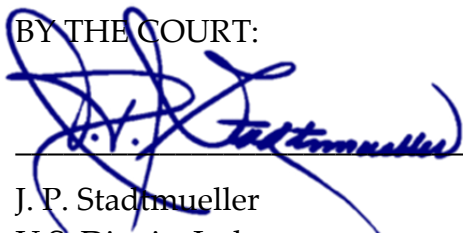
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that under the informal service agreement, Defendants shall file a responsive pleading to the amended complaint within sixty (60) days;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Defendants raise any exhaustion-related challenges by filing a motion for summary judgment within forty-five (45) days of service; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED if Defendants contemplate a motion to dismiss, the parties must meet and confer before the motion is filed. Defendants should take care to explain the reasons why they intend to move to dismiss the amended complaint, and Plaintiff should strongly consider filing a second amended complaint. The Court expects this exercise in efficiency will obviate the need to file most motions to dismiss. Indeed, when the Court grants a motion to dismiss, it typically grants leave to amend unless it is "certain from the face of the complaint that any amendment would be futile or otherwise unwarranted." *Harris v. Meisner*, No. 20-2650, 2021 WL 5563942, at *2 (7th Cir. Nov. 29, 2021) (quoting *Runnion ex rel. Runnion v. Girl Scouts of Greater Chi. & Nw. Ind.*, 786 F.3d 510, 524 (7th Cir. 2015)). Therefore, it is in both parties' interest to discuss the matter prior to motion submissions. Briefs in support of, or opposition to, motions to dismiss should cite no more than ten (10) cases per claim. No string citations will be accepted. If Defendants file a motion to dismiss, Plaintiff is hereby warned that he must file a response, in accordance with Civil Local Rule 7 (E.D. Wis.), or he may be deemed to have waived any argument against dismissal and face dismissal of this matter with prejudice.

Dated at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, this 19th day of March, 2025.

BY THE COURT:



J. P. Stadmueller
U.S. District Judge

Plaintiffs who are inmates at Prisoner E-Filing Program institutions shall submit all correspondence and case filings to institution staff, who will scan and e-mail documents to the Court. Prisoner E-Filing is mandatory for all inmates at Columbia Correctional Institution, Dodge Correctional Institution, Green Bay Correctional Institution, Oshkosh Correctional Institution, Waupun Correctional Institution, and Wisconsin Secure Program Facility.

Plaintiffs who are inmates at all other prison facilities, or who have been released from custody, will be required to submit all correspondence and legal material to:

Office of the Clerk
United States District Court
Eastern District of Wisconsin
362 United States Courthouse
517 E. Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

DO NOT MAIL ANYTHING DIRECTLY TO THE COURT'S CHAMBERS. If mail is received directly to the Court's chambers, **IT WILL BE RETURNED TO SENDER AND WILL NOT BE FILED IN THE CASE.**

Plaintiff is further advised that failure to timely file any brief, motion, response, or reply may result in the dismissal of this action for failure to prosecute. In addition, the parties must notify the Clerk of Court of any change of address. **IF PLAINTIFF FAILS TO PROVIDE AN UPDATED ADDRESS TO THE COURT AND MAIL IS RETURNED TO THE COURT AS UNDELIVERABLE, THE COURT WILL DISMISS THIS ACTION WITHOUT PREJUDICE.**