

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

RICARDO VALDEZ,

Plaintiff, No. 2:12-cv-2854 EFB F

VS.

MATTHEW CATE, et al.,

Defendants. ORDER

Plaintiff is a state prisoner proceeding without counsel in an action brought under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. This proceeding was referred to this court by Local Rule 302 pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1). In addition to filing a complaint, plaintiff has filed an application to proceed in forma pauperis.

I. Request to Proceed In Forma Pauperis

Plaintiff has requested leave to proceed in forma pauperis pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915. Dckt. No. 2. Plaintiff's application makes the showing required by 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(1) and (2). Accordingly, by separate order, the court directs the agency having custody of plaintiff to collect and forward the appropriate monthly payments for the filing fee as set forth in 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1) and (2).

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1 **II. Screening Order**

2 Federal courts must engage in a preliminary screening of cases in which prisoners seek
3 redress from a governmental entity or officer or employee of a governmental entity. 28 U.S.C.
4 § 1915A(a). The court must identify cognizable claims or dismiss the complaint, or any portion
5 of the complaint, if the complaint “is frivolous, malicious, or fails to state a claim upon which
6 relief may be granted,” or “seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such
7 relief.” *Id.* § 1915A(b).

8 In order to avoid dismissal for failure to state a claim a complaint must contain more than
9 “naked assertions,” “labels and conclusions” or “a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause
10 of action.” *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555-557 (2007). In other words,
11 “[t]hreadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action, supported by mere conclusory
12 statements do not suffice.” *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 129 S. Ct. 1937, 1949 (2009).

13 Furthermore, a claim upon which the court can grant relief has facial plausibility.
14 *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 570. “A claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual
15 content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the
16 misconduct alleged.” *Iqbal*, 129 S. Ct. at 1949. When considering whether a complaint states a
17 claim upon which relief can be granted, the court must accept the allegations as true, *Erickson v.*
18 *Pardus*, 127 S. Ct. 2197, 2200 (2007), and construe the complaint in the light most favorable to
19 the plaintiff, *see Scheuer v. Rhodes*, 416 U.S. 232, 236 (1974).

20 A *pro se* plaintiff must satisfy the pleading requirements of Rule 8(a) of the Federal
21 Rules of Civil Procedure. Rule 8(a)(2) “requires a complaint to include a short and plain
22 statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief, in order to give the defendant
23 fair notice of what the claim is and the grounds upon which it rests.” *Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly*,
24 550 U.S. 544, 554, 562-563 (2007) (citing *Conley v. Gibson*, 355 U.S. 41 (1957)).

25 The court has reviewed plaintiff’s complaint pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915A and finds
26 that it must be dismissed. The form complaint lists the names of defendants, includes a request

1 for relief, but no factual allegations. Under the heading “Statement of Claim,” it states, “See,
2 Appendix A.” Dckt. No. 1. Attached to the form complaint are nearly 200 pages of exhibits,
3 including many medical records, but no “Appendix A” or other statement of plaintiff’s claim.
4 Although the Federal Rules adopt a flexible pleading policy, a complaint must give fair notice
5 and state the elements of the claim plainly and succinctly. *Jones v. Community Redev. Agency*,
6 733 F.2d 646, 649 (9th Cir. 1984). Plaintiff must allege with at least some degree of
7 particularity overt acts which defendants engaged in that support plaintiff’s claim. *Id.* Because
8 plaintiff fails to allege *any* facts in support of a claim for relief, the complaint must be dismissed.

9 Plaintiff will be granted leave to file an amended complaint, if plaintiff can allege a
10 cognizable legal theory against a proper defendant and sufficient facts in support of that
11 cognizable legal theory. *Lopez v. Smith*, 203 F.3d 1122, 1126-27 (9th Cir. 2000) (en banc)
12 (district courts must afford pro se litigants an opportunity to amend to correct any deficiency in
13 their complaints). Should plaintiff choose to file an amended complaint, the amended complaint
14 shall clearly set forth the claims and allegations against each defendant. Any amended
15 complaint must cure the deficiencies identified above and also adhere to the following
16 requirements:

17 Any amended complaint must identify as a defendant only persons who personally
18 participated in a substantial way in depriving him of a federal constitutional right. *Johnson v.*
19 *Duffy*, 588 F.2d 740, 743 (9th Cir. 1978) (a person subjects another to the deprivation of a
20 constitutional right if he does an act, participates in another’s act or omits to perform an act he is
21 legally required to do that causes the alleged deprivation). It must also contain a caption
22 including the names of all defendants. Fed. R. Civ. P. 10(a).

23 Any amended complaint must be written or typed so that it so that it is complete in itself
24 without reference to any earlier filed complaint. L.R. 220. This is because an amended
25 complaint supersedes any earlier filed complaint, and once an amended complaint is filed, the
26 earlier filed complaint no longer serves any function in the case. *See Forsyth v. Humana*, 114

1 F.3d 1467, 1474 (9th Cir. 1997) (the ““amended complaint supersedes the original, the latter
2 being treated thereafter as non-existent.””) (quoting *Loux v. Rhay*, 375 F.2d 55, 57 (9th Cir.
3 1967)). Plaintiff may not change the nature of this suit by alleging new, unrelated claims in an
4 amended complaint. *George v. Smith*, 507 F.3d 605, 607 (7th Cir. 2007) (no “buckshot”
5 complaints).

6 Moreover, plaintiff is hereby informed that because this case is only in the pleading
7 stage, he need not prove his claims with evidence at this time. At this stage, plaintiff is only
8 required to provide notice of his claim through “a short and plain statement.” Fed. R. Civ. P.
9 8(a). By inundating the court with evidence at this stage in the proceedings, plaintiff only
10 burdens the court, confuses the records, and delays his lawsuit. If this action proceeds to a point
11 where submission of evidence is appropriate, for example, summary judgment or trial, plaintiff
12 will have the opportunity to submit necessary evidence. But in amending his complaint, plaintiff
13 should simply state the facts upon which he alleges a defendant has violated his constitutional
14 rights and refrain from submitting exhibits.

15 In order to state a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, a plaintiff must allege: (1) the violation
16 of a federal constitutional or statutory right; and (2) that the violation was committed by a person
17 acting under the color of state law. *See West v. Atkins*, 487 U.S. 42, 48 (1988); *Jones v.*
18 *Williams*, 297 F.3d 930, 934 (9th Cir. 2002). An individual defendant is not liable on a civil
19 rights claim unless the facts establish the defendant’s personal involvement in the constitutional
20 deprivation or a causal connection between the defendant’s wrongful conduct and the alleged
21 constitutional deprivation. *See Hansen v. Black*, 885 F.2d 642, 646 (9th Cir. 1989); *Johnson v.*
22 *Duffy*, 588 F.2d 740, 743-44 (9th Cir. 1978).

23 To state a claim for violation of the Eighth Amendment based on inadequate medical
24 care, plaintiff must allege “acts or omissions sufficiently harmful to evidence deliberate
25 indifference to serious medical needs.” *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 106 (1976). To prevail,
26 plaintiff must show both that his medical needs were objectively serious, and that defendant

1 possessed a sufficiently culpable state of mind. *Wilson v. Seiter*, 501 U.S. 294, 297-99 (1991);
2 *McKinney v. Anderson*, 959 F.2d 853, 854 (9th Cir. 1992). A serious medical need is one that
3 significantly affects an individual's daily activities, an injury or condition a reasonable doctor or
4 patient would find worthy of comment or treatment, or the existence of chronic and substantial
5 pain. *See, e.g., McGuckin v. Smith*, 974 F.2d 1050, 1059-60 (9th Cir. 1992), *overruled on other*
6 *grounds by WMX Techs. v. Miller*, 104 F.2d 1133, 1136 (9th Cir.1997) (*en banc*).

7 Deliberate indifference may be shown by the denial, delay or intentional interference
8 with medical treatment or by the way in which medical care is provided. *Hutchinson v. United*
9 *States*, 838 F.2d 390, 394 (9th Cir. 1988). To act with deliberate indifference, a prison official
10 must both be aware of facts from which the inference could be drawn that a substantial risk of
11 serious harm exists, and he must also draw the inference. *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 825, 837
12 (1994). Thus, a defendant is liable if he knows that plaintiff faces "a substantial risk of serious
13 harm and disregards that risk by failing to take reasonable measures to abate it." *Id.* at 847.

14 It is important to differentiate common law negligence claims of malpractice from
15 claims predicated on violations of the Eighth Amendment's prohibition of cruel and unusual
16 punishment. In asserting the latter, "[m]ere 'indifference,' 'negligence,' or 'medical
17 malpractice' will not support this cause of action." *Broughton v. Cutter Laboratories*, 622 F.2d
18 458, 460 (9th Cir. 1980) (citing *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 105-106 (1976); *see also*
19 *Toguchi v. Chung*, 391 F.3d 1051, 1057 (9th Cir. 2004). Moreover, it is well established that
20 mere differences of opinion concerning the appropriate treatment cannot be the basis of an
21 Eighth Amendment violation. *Jackson v. McIntosh*, 90 F.3d 330, 332 (9th Cir. 1996); *Franklin*
22 *v. Oregon*, 662 F.2d 1337, 1344 (9th Cir. 1981).

23 Accordingly, the court hereby orders that:

24 1. Plaintiff's request to proceed *in forma pauperis* is granted.

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1 2. Plaintiff shall pay the statutory filing fee of \$350. All payments shall be collected in
2 accordance with the notice to the Director of the California Department of Corrections and
3 Rehabilitation filed concurrently herewith.

4 3. The complaint is dismissed with leave to amend within 30 days. The amended
5 complaint must bear the docket number assigned to this case and be titled "First Amended
6 Complaint." Failure to comply with this order will result in a recommendation that this action be
7 dismissed for failure to state a claim. If plaintiff files an amended complaint stating a cognizable
8 claim the court will proceed with service of process by the United States Marshal.

9 Dated: November 29, 2012.

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11 EDMUND F. BRENNAN
12 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE