

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

United States District Court
Northern District of California

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

SIGNAL MUTUAL INDEMNITY
ASSOCIATION, LTD.,

Plaintiff,

v.

DIGNITY HEALTH, et al.,

Defendants.

Case No. [15-cv-03818-HSG](#)

**ORDER GRANTING DEFENDANTS’
MOTIONS TO DISMISS**

Re: Dkt. Nos. 38–39

Plaintiff Signal Mutual Indemnity Association, Ltd. (“Signal”) filed its first amended complaint on August 15, 2016, Dkt. No. 37 (“FAC”), following the Court’s order granting the motion to dismiss Signal’s original complaint, Dkt. No. 36 (Signal Mutual Indemnity Assoc., Ltd. v. Dignity Health, No. 15-cv-03818-HSG, 2016 WL 3902492 (N.D. Cal. July 19, 2016)). The motions to dismiss filed by Defendants Clement Jones and David Cohen are now fully briefed and pending before the Court. Dkt. Nos. 38–39. Defendant Dignity Health dba St. Francis Memorial Hospital (“Dignity Health”) has joined in the motions. Dkt. No. 40. For the reasons described below, the Court **GRANTS** the motions.¹

I. BACKGROUND

Signal alleges that the U.S. Department of Labor authorized it, as a group self-insurer, to secure and discharge a member’s liabilities to its employees under the Longshore and Harbor Workers’ Compensation Act (“LHWCA”).² FAC ¶ 3. During the relevant time period, Total Terminals International, Inc. (“TTI”) has been a member of Signal. Id. TTI employed Dwayne

¹ The Court finds this matter appropriate for disposition without oral argument and the matter is deemed submitted. See Civil L.R. 7-1(b).
² See generally 33 U.S.C. § 901–950.

1 Washington as a sidepick operator at the Port of Oakland. Id. ¶ 9. On August 27, 2012, the
2 sidepick that Mr. Washington was operating flipped forward, causing him serious injuries,
3 including to his back. Id. ¶ 10.

4 Lamorte Burns & Co., Inc. (“LBCI”) was one of Signal’s claims adjusters. Id. ¶ 17. On
5 January 30, 2014, LBCI wrote a letter to Dr. Jones at Dignity Health’s St. Francis Memorial
6 Hospital (“Hospital”), giving authorization to proceed with scheduling surgery on Mr. Washington
7 and requesting that Dr. Jones provide notification regarding the surgery date and any pre-operative
8 appointments and procedures. Id. ¶ 18. On March 12, 2014, LBCI wrote another letter to Dr.
9 Jones. Id. ¶ 19. The letter informed Dr. Jones that Mr. Washington had been cleared for surgery
10 by another doctor, authorized Dr. Jones to proceed with scheduling the surgery, and requested
11 notification regarding the surgery date. Id. ¶ 19. Signal alleges that each of the Defendants
12 accepted consideration for the services they performed pursuant to LBCI’s authorizations. Id. ¶
13 20.

14 On May 23, 2014, Mr. Washington underwent disc-replacement surgery at the Hospital.
15 Id. ¶ 25. Dr. Jones was the surgeon. Id. Dr. Cohen provided related pre-operative and post-
16 operative care, as did other members of the Hospital’s medical staff. Id. Following surgery, Mr.
17 Washington developed thigh swelling, severe pain, and other medical conditions. Id. ¶ 26. He
18 bled to death from a puncture to his left common iliac artery. Id.³

19 Signal alleges that, as a result of Mr. Washington’s death, it became liable to pay death
20 benefits under the LHWCA to his heirs, which Signal has paid and continues to pay. Id. ¶ 28.
21 Signal alleges that it also became obligated to pay funeral and medical expenses related to Mr.
22 Washington’s death and may be liable for other payments under the LHWCA. Id. Signal claims
23 that, but for Defendants’ alleged negligence, it would not have been required to make such
24 payments. Id. ¶ 29.

25 **II. LEGAL STANDARD**

26 Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a) requires that a complaint contain “a short and plain
27

28 ³ The FAC does not specify the date on which Mr. Washington died.

1 statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief[.]” A defendant may move to
2 dismiss a complaint for failing to state a claim upon which relief can be granted under Federal
3 Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6). “Dismissal under Rule 12(b)(6) is appropriate only where the
4 complaint lacks a cognizable legal theory or sufficient facts to support a cognizable legal theory.”
5 *Mendiondo v. Centinela Hosp. Med. Ctr.*, 521 F.3d 1097, 1104 (9th Cir. 2008). To survive a Rule
6 12(b)(6) motion, a plaintiff must plead “enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on
7 its face.” *Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007). A claim is facially plausible
8 when a plaintiff pleads “factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that
9 the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged.” *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009).

10 In reviewing the plausibility of a complaint, courts “accept factual allegations in the
11 complaint as true and construe the pleadings in the light most favorable to the nonmoving party.”
12 *Manzarek v. St. Paul Fire & Marine Ins. Co.*, 519 F.3d 1025, 1031 (9th Cir. 2008). Nonetheless,
13 Courts do not “accept as true allegations that are merely conclusory, unwarranted deductions of
14 fact, or unreasonable inferences.” *In re Gilead Scis. Secs. Litig.*, 536 F.3d 1049, 1055 (9th Cir.
15 2008). And even where facts are accepted as true, “a plaintiff may plead [him]self out of court” if
16 he “plead[s] facts which establish that he cannot prevail on his . . . claim.” *Weisbuch v. Cnty. of*
17 *Los Angeles*, 119 F.3d 778, 783 n.1 (9th Cir. 1997) (quotation marks and citation omitted).

18 If dismissal is appropriate under Rule 12(b)(6), a court “should grant leave to amend even
19 if no request to amend the pleading was made, unless it determines that the pleading could not
20 possibly be cured by the allegation of other facts.” *Lopez v. Smith*, 203 F.3d 1122, 1130 (9th Cir.
21 2000) (quotation marks and citation omitted). The Court is not required to grant leave to amend
22 where the plaintiff was advised of pleading deficiencies in a prior order of admission, yet failed to
23 correct them upon amendment. See *Zucco Partners, LLC v. Digimarc Corp.*, 552 F.3d 981, 1007
24 (9th Cir. 2009).

25 **III. DISCUSSION**

26 The FAC asserts four claims: (1) negligence, (2) breach of contract, (3) implied
27 contractual indemnity, and (4) equitable indemnity. Each of these claims fails for the reasons
28 articulated below.

1 **A. Negligence**

2 Signal’s negligence claim is barred for two reasons. First, Signal lacks standing to bring
3 the claim. The claim is premised on the allegation that Defendants’ negligent provision of medical
4 care caused Mr. Washington’s death. See FAC ¶¶ 31–36. Yet Signal is not one of the persons
5 identified by the applicable statute as entitled to bring an action for wrongful death. See Cal. Civ.
6 Proc. Code § 377.60. Moreover, Signal has specifically disavowed any intent to bring a
7 subrogation claim. FAC ¶ 7 (“This is not a subrogation claim to which any local statute would
8 apply nor is it derivative of Decedent’s claim.”); Dkt. No. 42 (“Opp.”) at 2 (“[T]his is not a
9 subrogation action.”).⁴

10 Second, Signal’s negligence claim is barred by the applicable statute of limitations, which
11 is one year. See Cal. Civ. Proc. Code § 340.5.⁵ Although the FAC fails to allege the date that Mr.
12 Washington died, the original complaint pled that he died on May 26, 2014. See Dkt. No. 1 ¶¶ 12,
13 15. Thus, Signal filed this suit on August 20, 2015, almost three months after the statute of
14 limitations had run. See *id.* A timely notice to sue letter may extend the statute of limitations by
15 90 days. See Cal. Civ. Proc. Code § 364. However, Signal once again fails to adequately plead
16 that this provision applies. See Signal, 2016 WL 3902492, at *5 (“The single sentence in the
17 complaint, that ‘[e]ach defendant was served with timely notice of Plaintiff’s intent to sue’ is
18 inadequate.” (quoting Dkt. No 1 ¶ 19)); FAC ¶ 30 (repeating identical language, along with the
19 legal conclusion that this “extended the statute of limitations by 90 days”). Although Signal has
20

21 ⁴ See also Cal. Labor Code § 3852; *Garofalo v. Princess Cruises, Inc.*, 85 Cal. App. 4th 1060,
22 1069–70 (2000) (declaring that, where an employer or its insurer is obligated to pay a worker’s
23 compensation claim for an industrial injury, section 3852 codifies the principles of equitable
24 subrogation, allowing the employer or its insurer to sue the third party tortfeasor responsible for
25 the injury to recoup the amount paid to the employee); 33 U.S.C. § 933(b), (h) (providing that,
subject to certain conditions, if an employer’s worker’s compensation insurer has provided
benefits to an injured longshoreman, the insurer may assert a subrogation claim against a third
party whose negligence or other fault has caused the longshoreman’s injury).

26 ⁵ Section 340.5 states in part:

27 In an action for injury or death against a health care provider based upon such
28 person’s alleged professional negligence, the time for the commencement of
 action shall be three years after the date of injury or one year after the plaintiff
 discovers, or through the use of reasonable diligence should have discovered, the
 injury, whichever occurs first.

Cal. Civ. Proc. Code § 340.5.

1 submitted a declaration and exhibit purporting to show that section 364 applies, the Court does not
2 consider these documents because they were not attached to the complaint or incorporated by
3 reference, and do not constitute judicially noticeable facts. See *United States v. Ritchie*, 342 F.3d
4 903, 907–908 (9th Cir. 2003) (identifying these exceptions to the general rule that a district court
5 may not consider materials outside the pleadings without converting a Rule 12(b)(6) motion into a
6 Rule 56 motion); see also *Int'l Union of Operating Engineers, Local 3 v. Zurich N. Am.*, No. S-06-
7 0957 WBS KJM, 2006 WL 2791156, at *2 (E.D. Cal. Sept. 27, 2006) (declining to consider
8 declarations submitted in support of opposition to motion to dismiss).⁶

9 Thus, Signal's negligence claim fails on both standing and statute of limitations grounds.
10 The Court's prior order put Signal on notice of these deficiencies. See *Signal*, 2016 WL 3902492,
11 at *4–5. Given Signal's failure to cure them on amendment, the Court declines to grant leave to
12 amend the negligence claim. See *Zucco*, 552 F.3d at 1007.

13 **B. Breach of Contract**

14 Signal's breach of contract claim fails on two independent grounds. First, Signal's
15 allegations could not plausibly demonstrate the existence of a contract between Signal and the
16 Defendants regarding the medical care and treatment of Mr. Washington. Second, Signal's
17 allegations could not plausibly show that such a contract included an "implied warranty of
18 workmanlike performance" that Defendants breached.

19 Under California law, "[t]o recover for breach of warranty or contract in a medical
20 malpractice case, there must be proof of an express contract by which the physician clearly
21 promises a particular result and the patient consents to treatment in reliance on that promise."
22 *McKinney v. Nash*, 120 Cal. App. 3d 428, 442 (1981). The facts alleged cannot plausibly show
23 the existence of a promise by Defendants of a particular result or that Signal's authorization (or
24 Mr. Washington's consent) was given in reliance on such a promise. It is not sufficient to plead

25 _____
26 ⁶ The FAC's single reference to serving Defendants "with timely notice of Plaintiff's intent to sue"
27 is insufficient to trigger the incorporation-by-reference doctrine. See *Ritchie*, 342 F.3d at 908
28 ("Even if a document is not attached to a complaint, it may be incorporated by reference into a
complaint if the plaintiff refers extensively to the document or the document forms the basis of the
plaintiff's claim." (emphasis added)).

1 that Dr. Jones sought and obtained authorization to perform a disc-replacement surgery from one
2 of Signal’s claims adjusters and that Defendants subsequently accepted consideration for the
3 services performed. See FAC ¶¶ 17–20. First, prior authorization for non-emergency medical
4 treatment is a commonly-used form of pre-service utilization review that seeks to contain
5 healthcare costs by ensuring in advance that the proposed treatment is necessary. See, e.g., *State*
6 *Comp. Ins. Fund v. Workers’ Comp. Appeals Bd.*, 44 Cal. 4th 230, 244–45 (2008) (finding that
7 utilization review to assess employees’ requests for medical treatment is required by California’s
8 workers’ compensation program); *id.* at 542 (process intended to “control[] skyrocketing costs”);
9 *Lauderdale Assocs. v. Dep’t of Health Servs.*, 67 Cal. App. 4th 117, 119 (1998) (describing
10 California’s Medicaid utilization control program, which is required by federal law and includes
11 prior review of medical treatment requests to ensure that they are medically necessary),
12 superseded by statute on other grounds as recognized in *Life Care Centers of Am. v. CalOptima*,
13 133 Cal. App. 4th 1169 (2005). Thus, the allegations of the complaint do not plausibly show that
14 the procedure followed here was anything other than a typical utilization review process to ensure
15 that Mr. Washington’s surgery was medically necessary. Second, as TTI’s insurer, Signal was
16 required to pay medical costs incurred to treat Mr. Washington’s work-related injury. See 33
17 U.S.C. § 907(a); see also FAC ¶ 12 (recognizing this requirement). Consequently, Signal’s
18 payment to Defendants does not plausibly demonstrate the existence of a contract, but instead
19 tends to indicate that Signal was simply fulfilling its obligations as an insurer.

20 Even assuming arguendo that Signal’s allegations regarding the existence of any contract
21 were adequate, its claim would nevertheless fail because it has not plausibly alleged the existence
22 of a maritime contract including an “implied warranty of workmanlike performance.” See *id.* ¶¶
23 20–22. “The implied warranty of workmanlike performance . . . applies only to contracts
24 cognizable under federal admiralty law.” *Rollin v. Kimberly Clark Tissue Co.*, 211 F.R.D. 670,
25 675 & n.6 (S.D. Ala. 2001); see also *Scindia Steam Nav. Co. v. De Los Santos*, 451 U.S. 156,
26 171–72 (1981) (observing that the stevedore normally warrants to discharge duties in
27 workmanlike manner, as recognized in *Ryan Stevedor. Co. v. Pan-Atl. Steam. Corp.*, 350 U.S. 124,
28 131–32 (1956), superseded by statute on other grounds as recognized in *Edmonds v. Compagnie*

1 Generale Transatlantique, 443 U.S. 256 (1979)); *Smith & Kelly Co. v. S/S Concordia TADJ*, 718
2 F.2d 1022, 1025–27 (11th Cir. 1983) (describing history of implied warranty of workmanlike
3 performance). This follows from the principle that “[w]hen a contract is a maritime one, and the
4 dispute is not inherently local, federal law controls the contract interpretation.” See *Norfolk S. Ry.*
5 *Co. v. Kirby*, 543 U.S. 14, 22–23 (2004).

6 To determine whether a contract is maritime in nature, the Ninth Circuit now applies the
7 “primary objective” test from *Norfolk*. See *Sentry Select Ins. Co. v. Royal Ins. Co. of Am.*, 481
8 F.3d 1208, 1219 (9th Cir. 2007). Specifically, the Court must “examine[] the contract as a whole
9 to determine whether its primary purpose [is] to protect or affect maritime commerce.” See *id.*
10 Here, the alleged contracts, which pertained to the provision of medical care at an onshore
11 hospital, clearly did not have the primary purpose of protecting or affecting maritime commerce.
12 Although Mr. Washington was a longshoreman, Defendants’ failure to perform his medical
13 procedure as allegedly warranted would have had the same negligible impact on maritime
14 commerce whether he had been injured in an automobile accident on his way to the supermarket
15 or while operating a side-pick at the Port of Oakland. Cf. *Rollin*, 211 F.R.D. at 677 (“A physician
16 who treats off-duty seamen for injuries sustained previously while at sea does nothing different
17 than when he or she treats a mechanic who accidentally crushes a thumb while working with a ball
18 peen hammer.”) This conclusion is unchanged by the fact that Signal was required by the
19 LHWCA to pay the medical costs for Mr. Washington’s procedure. See *Simon v. Intercontinental*
20 *Transp. (ICT) B.V.*, 882 F.2d 1435, 1443 (9th Cir. 1989) (“Congress’ use of its maritime power to
21 create the rights and obligations of the LHWCA does not automatically confer admiralty
22 jurisdiction on every claim that in any way relates to those rights and obligations.”).

23 The Ninth Circuit’s reasoning in *Simon* supports the Court’s holding that the alleged
24 contract could not plausibly have been a maritime contract. In *Simon*, the Ninth Circuit found that
25 a stevedore company’s contract for insurance against liability for injury to stevedores under the
26 LHWCA was not a maritime contract:

27 The insurance is only indirectly connected with maritime commerce
28 because of the relationship between [the stevedoring company’s]
potential compensation liability and its performance of stevedoring

1 contracts. Such a relationship is far too tenuous to justify
2 classifying the insurance for compensation liability as a maritime
obligation or interest sufficient to bring the policies and their related
servicing agreements within the pale of admiralty jurisdiction.

3 *Id.* at 1443.⁷ If a contract to provide insurance coverage for injuries to stevedores under the
4 LHWCA is not a maritime contract, then alleged contracts between an insurer and private medical
5 providers to treat an injured stevedore are not maritime contracts either: if anything, the
6 relationship between the latter contracts and maritime commerce is even more “tenuous.” See *id.*

7 Finally, the Court’s holding is supported by out-of-Circuit decisions finding that a land-
8 based physician’s treatment of a patient injured at sea did not give rise to a maritime contract. See
9 *Joiner v. Diamond M Drilling Co.*, 688 F.2d 256, 260 (5th Cir. 1982) (“A private land-locked
10 physician who treats a patient who happens to have been injured at sea, does not thereby enter into
11 an implied maritime contract.”); *Rollin*, 211 F.R.D. at 675–77 (declining, on futility grounds, to
12 grant leave to amend third-party complaint, given that any implied contract between ship owner
13 and land-based physician to supply medical treatment to seaman injured aboard ship was
14 insufficient to invoke federal admiralty jurisdiction). While Mr. Washington was a longshoreman
15 injured at port, as opposed to a seaman injured at sea, the reasoning of these cases is still
16 persuasive. If anything, the absence of a maritime contract is even clearer here.

17 Consequently, Signal’s breach of contract claim fails. Moreover, the Court can envision
18 no way that Signal could cure the pleading deficiencies through the truthful allegation of
19 additional facts. Therefore, the Court denies leave to amend the breach of contract claim. See
20 *Lopez*, 203 F.3d at 1130.

21 **C. Implied Contractual Indemnity**

22 Signal’s claim for implied contractual entity is premised on the existence of contracts
23 between Signal and Defendants. See FAC ¶ 12 (“It was implied in the contracts between Plaintiff
24 and Defendants, and each of them, that Defendants would indemnify Plaintiff . . .”). However,
25 Signal has failed, for the reasons articulated above, to allege facts plausibly showing the existence
26

27 ⁷ Although Simon predated *Norfolk*, and therefore did not apply the “primary objective” test, this
28 portion of the opinion is still good law. See *Sentry*, 481 F.3d at 1220 (favorably quoting the same
passage when reaching its holding under the “primary objective” test).

1 of any contract between Signal and Defendants. This is fatal to Signal’s claim for implied
2 equitable indemnity.

3 Furthermore, even assuming *arguendo* the existence of such contracts, the result would be
4 no different. Implied contractual terms are disfavored, and Signal fails to allege facts plausibly
5 showing satisfaction of the various requirements for finding an implied contractual provision. See
6 *Grebow v. Mercury Ins. Co.*, 241 Cal. App. 4th 564, 578–79 (2015) (“A court may find an implied
7 contract provision only if (1) the implication either arises from the contract’s express language or
8 is indispensable to effectuating the parties’ intentions; (2) it appears that the implied term was so
9 clearly within the parties’ contemplation when they drafted the contract that they did not feel the
10 need to express it; (3) legal necessity justifies the implication; (4) the implication would have been
11 expressed if the need to do so had been called to the parties’ attention; and (5) the contract does
12 not already address completely the subject of the implication.”).

13 Thus, Signal’s claim for implied contractual indemnity fails on two independent grounds.⁸
14 Furthermore, leave to amend this claim is not warranted. Signal’s original complaint asserted a
15 claim for “implied equitable indemnity and subrogation.” Dkt. No. 1 ¶¶ 24–27. The Court’s prior
16 order described the deficiencies of that claim and ultimately concluded that “[t]he complaint does
17 not properly notify the Defendants of the legal basis for an indemnity and/or subrogation claim.”
18 See *Signal*, 2016 WL 3902492, at *5–6. Given Signal’s failure to cure its deficient indemnity
19 allegations upon amendment, the Court declines to grant Signal leave to amend its implied
20 contractual indemnity claim. See *Zucco*, 552 F.3d at 1007.

21 **D. Equitable Indemnity**

22 Signal also fails to state a claim for equitable indemnity. FAC ¶¶ 48–54. “It is well-settled
23 in California that equitable indemnity is only available among tortfeasors who are jointly and
24 severally liable for the plaintiff’s injury.” *Stop Loss Ins. Brokers, Inc. v. Brown & Toland Med.*
25 *Grp.*, 143 Cal. App. 4th 1036, 1040 (2006) (emphasis in original). The Court of Appeal has

26 _____
27 ⁸ In opposition, Signal claims that “aside from indemnity arising out of implied contract law, Signal
28 also seeks indemnity under a quasi-contractual theory.” Opp. at 14. However, the Third Cause of
Action, entitled “Implied Contractual Indemnity,” makes no allegation whatsoever as to such a
theory. FAC ¶¶ 44–47.

1 elaborated:

2 With limited exception, there must be some basis for tort liability
3 against the proposed indemnitor. Generally, it is based on a duty
4 owed to the underlying plaintiff, although vicarious liability and
strict liability also may sustain application of equitable indemnity.
In addition, implied contractual indemnity between the indemnitor
and the indemnitee can provide a basis for equitable indemnity.

5 BFGC Architects Planners, Inc. v. Forcum/Mackey Constr., Inc., 119 Cal. App. 4th 848, 852
6 (2004) (internal citations omitted). Here, Signal has not alleged facts plausibly showing
7 entitlement to equitable indemnity. The FAC contains no facts even suggesting that TTI, as Mr.
8 Washington’s employer, or Signal, as TTI’s insurer, tortuously injured him. Signal does not
9 allege vicarious or strict liability. And as articulated above, Signal’s allegations regarding implied
10 contractual indemnity are insufficient. Accordingly, the FAC provides no plausible basis to find
11 that Signal and Defendants are tortfeasors who are jointly and severally liable for Mr.
12 Washington’s death. Therefore, Signal’s claim for equitable indemnitee fails.

13 Furthermore, leave to amend this claim is not warranted. As described above, Signal was
14 put on notice regarding the inadequacy of the indemnity allegations in its prior complaint. Given
15 Signal’s failure to cure its deficient indemnity allegations upon amendment, the Court declines to
16 grant Signal leave to amend its equitable indemnity claim. See Zucco, 552 F.3d at 1007.

17 **E. Burnside**

18 Signal argues that Federal Marine Terminals, Inc. v. Burnside Shipping Co., 394 U.S. 404
19 (1969) “controls” the instant action. Opp. at 5. That case arose out of the death of a stevedore
20 who died while conducting carpentry work on the ‘tween deck of a ship. Id. at 407–08. The
21 Court found that statutory subrogation under section 33 of the LHWCA, 33 U.S.C. § 933, was not
22 the exclusive remedy available to the stevedore contractor seeking to recover from the shipowner
23 compensation benefits payable to the deceased employee’s beneficiary. Id. at 412–14.⁹ The Court

24 _____
25 ⁹ The Court also ruled that “federal maritime law does impose on the shipowner a duty to the
26 stevedoring contractor of due care under the circumstances, and does recognize a direct action in
27 tort against the shipowner to recover the amount of compensation payments occasioned by the
28 latter’s negligence.” Burnside, 394 U.S. at 416–17. However, any such duty is irrelevant here
because Signal has once again failed to allege any facts plausibly showing satisfaction of the
requirements for extending admiralty jurisdiction over a tort. See Signal, 2016 WL 3902492, at
*3–4 (“Given that the allegations in the complaint fail to establish how the tort claims—both the
sidepick malfunction and Defendants’ alleged negligence at the hospital—could satisfy the

1 expressly declined to find “that statutory subrogation is the employer’s exclusive remedy against
2 third party wrongdoers.” *Id.* at 413–14. That principle survived the 1972 amendments to the
3 LHWCA. See *Crescent Wharf & Warehouse Co. v. Barracuda Tanker Corp.*, 696 F.2d 703, 706–
4 07 (9th Cir. 1983).

5 Nonetheless, *Burnside* does not create a standalone cause of action out of thin air. The
6 Fifth Circuit has held that *Burnside* “make[s] it plain beyond any question that the cause of action
7 so recognized is not created, expressly or impliedly, by the LHWCA and does not arise from or
8 depend on any rights or obligations which the LHWCA imposes as between the employer and the
9 offending third party.” See *Lowe v. Ingalls Shipbuilding, A Div. of Litton Sys., Inc.*, 723 F.2d
10 1173, 1182 (5th Cir. 1984). Therefore, if Signal seeks a remedy other than subrogation under
11 section 933, it must adequately plead a cause of action outside the LHWCA as a basis for
12 recovery. See *Louviere v. Shell Oil Co.*, 509 F.2d 278, 284 (5th Cir. 1975) (“We therefore hold
13 that in the circumstances this case presents the employer who pays compensation without an
14 award is not barred by Section 33 from pursuing whatever nonstatutory rights he may have
15 against third party wrongdoers.” (emphasis added)).

16 In light of the foregoing, *Burnside* clearly does not save the FAC. Signal specifically
17 disavows asserting a subrogation claim under the LHWCA, but fails to adequately state any claim
18 independent of the LHWCA. Therefore, dismissal is warranted notwithstanding *Burnside*.

19 //
20 //
21 //
22 //
23 //
24 //

26 locality test, maritime jurisdiction does not apply.”); *Ali v. Rogers*, 780 F.3d 1229, 1235 (9th Cir.
27 2015) (“Tort claims may sound in admiralty jurisdiction if they satisfy a test with three
28 components showing that the claim has the requisite maritime flavor. The relevant tort or harm
must have (1) taken place on navigable water (or a vessel on navigable water having caused an
injury on land), (2) a potentially disruptive impact on maritime commerce, and (3) a substantial
relationship to traditional maritime activity.” (internal citations and quotation marks omitted)).


1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

IV. CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the Court **GRANTS** Defendants' motions to dismiss without leave to amend.¹⁰ The Clerk is directed to enter judgment in favor of Defendants and close the case.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: 9/21/2017


HAYWOOD S. GILLIAM, JR.
United States District Judge

¹⁰ Relatedly, Docket No. 40 is **TERMINATED**.