

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

EDWARD JERMAINE EASTERLING,

Plaintiff,

v.

CAMDEN COUNTY JAIL FACILITY,

Defendant.

HONORABLE JEROME B. SIMANDLE

Civil Action

No. 16-cv-06972 (JBS-AMD)

OPINION

APPEARANCES:

Edward Jermaine Easterling, Plaintiff Pro Se
27 Morris Drive
Sicklerville, NJ 08081

SIMANDLE, Chief District Judge:

I. INTRODUCTION

Plaintiff Edward Jermaine Easterling seeks to bring a civil rights complaint against Camden County Jail Facility ("CCJF") pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 for allegedly unconstitutional conditions of confinement. Complaint, Docket Entry 1.

28 U.S.C. 1915(e)(2) requires a court to review complaints prior to service in cases in which a plaintiff is proceeding *in forma pauperis*. The Court must *sua sponte* dismiss any claim that is frivolous, is malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. This action is subject to *sua sponte* screening for dismissal under Section 1915(e)(2)(B) because Plaintiff is proceeding *in forma pauperis*.

For the reasons set forth below, the Court will dismiss the Complaint with prejudice for failure to state a claim. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(b)(ii).

II. BACKGROUND

Plaintiff's Complaint states: "I was made to sleep on the floor, denied showers and toilet paper. I was refused medical treatment for toothaches and ongoing headaches." Complaint § III(C).

Plaintiff alleges that these events giving rise to his claims occurred: "5/2002." *Id.* § III(B).

Plaintiff contends that he sustained skin cuts from sleeping "on the dirty floors." He also alleges that he "required [a] tooth extraction from being denied dental services." *Id.* § IV.

Plaintiff seeks \$5,000 in relief. *Id.* § V.

III. STANDARD OF REVIEW

To survive *sua sponte* screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2) for failure to state a claim, a complaint must allege "sufficient factual matter" to show that the claim is facially plausible. *Fowler v. UPMS Shadyside*, 578 F.3d 203, 210 (3d Cir. 2009) (citation omitted). "A claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged." *Fair Wind Sailing, Inc. v. Dempster*,

764 F.3d 303, 308 n.3 (3d Cir. 2014). “[A] pleading that offers ‘labels or conclusions’ or ‘a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action will not do.’” *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (quoting *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007)).

IV. DISCUSSION

Plaintiff asserts claims against CCJF for allegedly unconstitutional conditions of confinement. The Complaint must be dismissed for failure to state a claim. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii).

First, the Complaint must be dismissed as CCJF is not a “state actor” within the meaning of § 1983. *See, e.g., Grabow v. Southern State Corr. Facility*, 726 F. Supp. 537, 538–39 (D.N.J. 1989) (correctional facility is not a “person” under § 1983). Accordingly, the claims against CCJF must be dismissed with prejudice.

Second, there are not enough facts for the Court to infer Plaintiff was denied adequate medical care. In order to set forth a cognizable claim for violation of his right to adequate medical care, an inmate must allege: (1) a serious medical need; and (2) behavior on the part of prison officials that constitutes deliberate indifference to that need. *See Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 106 (1976); *Natale v. Camden Cnty. Corr. Facility*, 318 F.3d 575, 582 (3d Cir. 2003). A mere assertion

that Plaintiff was not given medication for toothaches and headaches is insufficient to meet the pleading standard in the absence of any facts. (Complaint §§ III(C), IV.)

Finally, "plaintiffs who file complaints subject to dismissal should receive leave to amend unless amendment would be inequitable under [§ 1915] or futile." *Grayson v. Mayview State Hosp.*, 293 F.3d 103, 114 (3d Cir. 2002). This Court denies leave to amend at this time as Plaintiff's Complaint is barred by the statute of limitations, which is governed by New Jersey's two-year limitations period for personal injury.¹ See *Wilson v. Garcia*, 471 U.S. 261, 276 (1985); *Dique v. N.J. State Police*, 603 F.3d 181, 185 (3d Cir. 2010). The accrual date of a § 1983 action is determined by federal law, however. *Wallace v. Kato*, 549 U.S. 384, 388 (2007); *Montanez v. Sec'y Pa. Dep't of Corr.*, 773 F.3d 472, 480 (3d Cir. 2014). "Under federal law, a cause of action accrues when the plaintiff knew or should have known of the injury upon which the action is based." *Montanez*, 773 F.3d at 480 (internal quotation marks omitted).

¹ "Although the running of the statute of limitations is ordinarily an affirmative defense, where that defense is obvious from the face of the complaint and no development of the record is necessary, a court may dismiss a time-barred complaint sua sponte under § 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii) for failure to state a claim." *Ostuni v. Wa Wa's Mart*, 532 F. App'x 110, 111-12 (3d Cir. 2013) (per curiam).

Plaintiff alleges that these events giving rise to his claims occurred: "5/2002." Complaint § III(B). The allegedly unconstitutional conditions of confinement at CCJF would have been immediately apparent to Plaintiff at the time of detention. Accordingly, the statute of limitations for Plaintiff's claims expired in May 2004. As there are no grounds for equitable tolling of the statute of limitations,² the Complaint will be dismissed with prejudice. *Ostuni v. Wa Wa's Mart*, 532 F. App'x 110, 112 (3d Cir. 2013) (per curiam) (affirming dismissal with prejudice due to expiration of statute of limitations).

V. CONCLUSION

For the reasons stated above, the Complaint is dismissed with prejudice for failure to state a claim. An appropriate order follows.

February 9, 2017

Date

s/ Jerome B. Simandle

JEROME B. SIMANDLE

Chief U.S. District Judge

² Equitable tolling "is only appropriate '(1) where the defendant has actively misled the plaintiff respecting the plaintiff's cause of action; (2) where the plaintiff in some extraordinary way has been prevented from asserting his or her rights; or (3) where the plaintiff has timely asserted his or her rights mistakenly in the wrong forum.'" *Omar v. Blackman*, 590 F. App'x 162, 166 (3d Cir. 2014) (quoting *Santos ex rel. Beato v. United States*, 559 F.3d 189, 197 (3d Cir. 2009)).