

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA
STATESVILLE DIVISION
5:18-cv-47-FDW**

ARTHUR JAY GOULETTE,)
)
 Plaintiff,)
)
vs.)
)
)
)
MARTA M. KALINSKI ,)
BENJAMIN M. ANDERSON,)
)
 Defendants.)
_____)

ORDER

THIS MATTER is before the Court on initial review of Plaintiff’s Amended Complaint pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e) and § 1915A. (Doc. No. 12). Also pending is Plaintiff’s Motion to Appoint Counsel. (Doc. No. 13). On April 26, 2018, the Court entered an order waiving the initial filing fee and directing monthly payments to be made from Plaintiff’s prison account. (Doc. No. 9). Thus, Plaintiff is proceeding in forma pauperis.

I. BACKGROUND

Pro se Plaintiff Arthur Jay Goulette is a North Carolina prisoner incarcerated at the Alexander Correctional Institution in Taylorsville, North Carolina. Plaintiff filed this action on March 16, 2018, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983. Plaintiff filed an Amended Complaint on May 24, 2018. (Doc. No. 12). Plaintiff has named as the two Defendants Marta M. Kalinski, identified as a doctor at Alexander at all relevant times, and Benjamin M. Anderson, identified as the Chief Medical Officer/Assistant Superintendent of Alexander. Plaintiff purports to bring an Eighth Amendment claim against Defendants for deliberate indifference to serious medical needs

based on Defendants' refusal to provide him with proper medical care related to his injured neck and back. Plaintiff seeks injunctive relief and compensatory damages.

II. STANDARD OF REVIEW

Because Plaintiff is proceeding in forma pauperis, the Court must review the Complaint to determine whether it is subject to dismissal on the grounds that it is "frivolous or malicious [or] fails to state a claim on which relief may be granted." 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2). Furthermore, § 1915A requires an initial review of a "complaint in a civil action in which a prisoner seeks redress from a governmental entity or officer or employee of a governmental entity," and the court must identify cognizable claims or dismiss the complaint, or any portion of the complaint, if the complaint is frivolous, malicious, or fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted; or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. In its frivolity review, this Court must determine whether the Complaint raises an indisputably meritless legal theory or is founded upon clearly baseless factual contentions, such as fantastic or delusional scenarios. Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 327-28 (1989).

III. DISCUSSION

Claims under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 based on an alleged lack of or inappropriate medical treatment fall within the Eighth Amendment's prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment. Estelle v. Gamble, 429 U.S. 97, 104 (1976). To state a claim under the Eighth Amendment, a plaintiff must show a "deliberate indifference to serious medical needs" of the inmate. Id. "Deliberate indifference requires a showing that the defendants actually knew of and disregarded a substantial risk of serious injury to the detainee or that they actually knew of and ignored a detainee's serious need for medical care." Young v. City of Mt. Ranier, 238 F.3d 567, 575-76 (4th Cir. 2001) (citations omitted). "To establish that a health care provider's actions constitute

deliberate indifference to a serious medical need, the treatment must be so grossly incompetent, inadequate, or excessive as to shock the conscience or to be intolerable to fundamental fairness.” Miltier v. Beorn, 896 F.2d 848, 851 (4th Cir. 1990).

Allegations that might be sufficient to support negligence and medical malpractice claims do not, without more, rise to the level of a cognizable § 1983 claim. Estelle, 429 U.S. at 106; Grayson v. Peed, 195 F.3d 692, 695 (4th Cir. 1999) (“Deliberate indifference is a very high standard—a showing of mere negligence will not meet it.”). To be found liable under the Eighth Amendment, a prison official must know of and consciously or intentionally disregard “an excessive risk to inmate health or safety.” Farmer v. Brennan, 511 U.S. 825, 837 (1994); Johnson v. Quinones, 145 F.3d 164, 167 (4th Cir. 1998). “[E]ven if a prison doctor is mistaken or negligent in his diagnosis or treatment, no constitutional issue is raised absent evidence of abuse, intentional mistreatment, or denial of medical attention.” Stokes v. Hurdle, 393 F. Supp. 757, 762 (D. Md. 1975), aff’d, 535 F.2d 1250 (4th Cir. 1976). The constitutional right is to medical care. No right exists to the type or scope of care desired by the individual prisoner. Id. at 763. Therefore, a disagreement “between an inmate and a physician over the inmate’s proper medical care [does] not state a § 1983 claim unless exceptional circumstances are alleged.” Wright v. Collins, 766 F.2d 841, 849 (4th Cir. 1985) (dismissing the plaintiff’s Section 1983 claim against a defendant physician for allegedly discharging the plaintiff too early from a medical clinic, as such claim did not rise to the level of deliberate indifference but would, “at most, constitute a claim of medical malpractice”).

The Court finds that, assuming that Plaintiff’s allegations are true, and drawing all reasonable inferences in his favor, Plaintiff’s claim against Defendants for deliberate indifference to serious medical needs is not clearly frivolous.

Next, as to Plaintiff's motion to appoint counsel, there is no absolute right to the appointment of counsel in civil actions such as this one. Therefore, a plaintiff must present "exceptional circumstances" in order to require the Court to seek the assistance of a private attorney for a plaintiff who is unable to afford counsel. Miller v. Simmons, 814 F.2d 962, 966 (4th Cir. 1987). In support of the motion to appoint counsel, Plaintiff states that he cannot afford counsel; his imprisonment will greatly limit his ability to litigate the issues; the issues are complex; he has no access to a law library and limited knowledge of the law; he suffers from a traumatic brain injury; this case will likely involve conflicting testimony; and he has repeatedly tried to obtain an attorney to no avail. (Doc. No. 13 at 2). Notwithstanding Plaintiff's contentions to the contrary, this case does not present exceptional circumstances that justify appointment of counsel. Therefore, Plaintiff's motion to appoint counsel is denied.

IV. CONCLUSION


For the reasons stated herein, Plaintiff has alleged a claim for deliberate indifference to serious medical needs against Defendants sufficient to survive this Court's initial review.

IT IS, THEREFORE, ORDERED that:

1. Plaintiff's Amended Complaint, (Doc. No. 12), survives initial review under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e).
2. Plaintiff's Motion to Appoint Counsel (Doc. No. 13), is **DENIED**.
3. This Court recently enacted Local Rule 4.3, which sets forth a procedure to waive service of process for current and former employees of the North Carolina Department of Public Safety ("NCDPS") in actions filed by North Carolina State prisoners. The Clerk of Court shall commence the procedure for waiver of service as set forth in Local Rule 4.3 for Defendants, who are current or former employees

of NCDPS.

Signed: August 2, 2018


Frank D. Whitney
Chief United States District Judge

