

§ 122C-271. Disposition.

(a) If a commitment examiner has recommended outpatient commitment and the respondent has been released pending the district court hearing, the court may make one of the following dispositions:

- (1) If the court finds by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that the respondent has a mental illness; that the respondent is capable of surviving safely in the community with available supervision from family, friends, or others; that based on respondent's treatment history, the respondent is in need of treatment in order to prevent further disability or deterioration that would predictably result in dangerousness as defined in G.S. 122C-3(11); and that the respondent's current mental status or the nature of the respondent's illness limits or negates the respondent's ability to make an informed decision to seek voluntarily or comply with recommended treatment, it may order outpatient commitment for a period not in excess of 90 days.
- (2) If the court does not find that the respondent meets the criteria of commitment set out in subdivision (1) of this subsection, the respondent shall be discharged and the proposed outpatient physician center shall be so notified.
- (3) Before ordering any outpatient commitment under this subsection, the court shall make findings of fact as to the availability of outpatient treatment from an outpatient treatment physician or center that has agreed to accept the respondent as a client of outpatient treatment services. The court shall show on the order the outpatient treatment physician or center that is to be responsible for the management and supervision of the respondent's outpatient commitment. If the designated outpatient treatment physician or center will be monitoring and supervising the respondent's outpatient commitment pursuant to a contract for services with an LME/MCO, the court shall show on the order the identity of the LME/MCO. The clerk of court shall send a copy of the outpatient commitment order to the designated outpatient treatment physician or center and to the respondent client or the legally responsible person. The clerk of court shall also send a copy of the order to that LME/MCO. Copies of outpatient commitment orders sent by the clerk of court to an outpatient treatment center or physician under this section, including orders sent to an LME/MCO, shall be sent by the most reliable and expeditious means, but in no event less than 48 hours after the hearing.

(b) If the respondent has been held in a 24-hour facility pending the district court hearing pursuant to G.S. 122C-268, the court may make one of the following dispositions:

- (1) If the court finds by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that the respondent has a mental illness; that the respondent is capable of surviving safely in the community with available supervision from family, friends, or others; that based on respondent's psychiatric history, the respondent is in need of treatment in order to prevent further disability or deterioration that would predictably result in dangerousness as defined by G.S. 122C-3(11); and that the respondent's current mental status or the nature of the respondent's illness limits or negates the respondent's ability to make an informed decision voluntarily to seek or comply with recommended treatment, it may order outpatient commitment for a period not in excess of 90 days. If the commitment proceedings were initiated as the result of the respondent's being charged with a violent crime, including a crime involving an assault with a deadly weapon, and the respondent was found incapable of proceeding, the commitment order shall so show.

- (2) If the court finds by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that the respondent has a mental illness and is dangerous to self, as defined in G.S. 122C-3(11)a., or others, as defined in G.S. 122C-3(11)b., it may order inpatient commitment at a 24-hour facility described in G.S. 122C-252 for a period not in excess of 90 days. However, no respondent found to have both an intellectual disability and a mental illness may be committed to a State, area, or private facility for individuals with intellectual disabilities. An individual who has a mental illness and is dangerous to self, as defined in G.S. 122C-3(11)a., or others, as defined in G.S. 122C-3(11)b., may also be committed to a combination of inpatient and outpatient commitment at both a 24-hour facility and an outpatient treatment physician or center for a period not in excess of 90 days. If the commitment proceedings were initiated as the result of the respondent's being charged with a violent crime, including a crime involving an assault with a deadly weapon, and the respondent was found incapable of proceeding, the commitment order shall so show. If the court orders inpatient commitment for a respondent who is under an outpatient commitment order, the outpatient commitment is terminated; and the clerk of the superior court of the county where the district court hearing is held shall send a notice of the inpatient commitment to the clerk of superior court where the outpatient commitment was being supervised.
- (3) If the court does not find that the respondent meets either of the commitment criteria set out in subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection, the respondent shall be discharged, and the facility in which the respondent was last a client shall be so notified.
- (4) Before ordering any outpatient commitment, the court shall make findings of fact as to the availability of outpatient treatment from an outpatient treatment physician or center that has agreed to accept the respondent as a client of outpatient treatment services. The court shall also show on the order the outpatient treatment physician or center who is to be responsible for the management and supervision of the respondent's outpatient commitment. When an outpatient commitment order is issued for a respondent held in a 24-hour facility, the court may order the respondent held at the facility for no more than 72 hours in order for the facility to notify the designated outpatient treatment physician or center of the treatment needs of the respondent. The clerk of court in the county where the facility is located shall send a copy of the outpatient commitment order to the designated outpatient treatment physician or center and to the respondent or the legally responsible person. If the designated outpatient treatment physician or center shall be monitoring and supervising the respondent's outpatient commitment pursuant to a contract for services with an LME/MCO, the clerk of court shall show on the order the identity of the LME/MCO. The clerk of court shall send a copy of the order to the LME/MCO. Copies of outpatient commitment orders sent by the clerk of court to an outpatient treatment center or physician pursuant to this subdivision, including orders sent to an LME/MCO, shall be sent by the most reliable and expeditious means, but in no event less than 48 hours after the hearing. If the outpatient commitment will be supervised in a county other than the county where the commitment originated, the court shall order venue for further court proceedings to be transferred to the county where the outpatient commitment will be supervised. Upon an order changing venue, the clerk of superior court in the county where the commitment originated shall

transfer the file to the clerk of superior court in the county where the outpatient commitment is to be supervised.

(c) If the respondent was found not guilty by reason of insanity and has been held in a 24-hour facility pending the court hearing held pursuant to G.S. 122C-268.1, the court may make one of the following dispositions:

- (1) If the court finds that the respondent has not proved by a preponderance of the evidence that the respondent no longer has a mental illness or that the respondent is no longer dangerous to others, it shall order inpatient treatment at a 24-hour facility for a period not to exceed 90 days.
- (2) If the court finds that the respondent has proven by a preponderance of the evidence that the respondent no longer has a mental illness or that the respondent is no longer dangerous to others, the court shall order the respondent discharged and released. (1973, c. 726, s. 1; c. 1408, s. 1; 1977, c. 400, s. 8; c. 739, s. 2; 1979, c. 358, s. 26; c. 915, ss. 8, 15, 16; 1981, c. 537, s. 1; 1983, c. 380, s. 8; c. 638, s. 14; c. 864, s. 4; 1985, c. 589, s. 2; c. 695, s. 2; 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 863, ss. 20-22; 1989, c. 225, s. 1; c. 770, s. 73; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 823, s. 8; 1991, c. 37, s. 13; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 1034, s. 5; 1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 739, s. 13; 2018-33, s. 30; 2019-76, s. 10.)