

*This opinion is nonprecedential except as provided by
Minn. R. Civ. App. P. 136.01, subd. 1(c).*

**STATE OF MINNESOTA
IN COURT OF APPEALS
A25-0927**

In the Matter of the Civil Commitment of: Abdulkadir Elmi Egal.

**Filed October 20, 2025
Remanded
Bentley, Judge**

Hennepin County District Court
File No. 27-MH-PR-25-365

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Considered and decided by Bentley, Presiding Judge; Wheelock, Judge; and Larson, Judge.

NONPRECEDENTIAL OPINION

BENTLEY, Judge

Appellant Abdulkadir Elmi Egal challenges the district court's determination that he is subject to civil commitment as a person who poses a risk of harm due to mental illness. Specifically, he asserts that the record does not establish by clear and convincing evidence that he "poses a substantial likelihood of physical harm to self or others" as shown by "a recent attempt or threat to physically harm self or others." Minn. Stat. § 253B.02, subd. 17a(a)(3) (2024).

Because the district court's findings are inadequate to facilitate meaningful appellate review, we remand for additional findings.

FACTS

The following facts are contained within exhibits received by or documents otherwise submitted to the district court.

Egal has been diagnosed with schizophrenia. His schizophrenia manifests in symptoms such as delusional beliefs, hallucinations, and disorganized thinking. His condition has been described by professionals as "refractory or treatment resistant."

Because of his mental illness, Egal has been subject to prior civil-commitment orders. Relevant here is his most recent commitment following a 2023 incident when he allegedly used a knife and a chemical-irritant spray to injure security officers while being escorted out of a shopping mall. Egal was found incompetent to stand trial on a resulting criminal charge. The district court then filed a civil commitment order in April 2023, on the basis that Egal was a person who poses a risk of harm due to mental illness. That order of commitment was continued in October 2023, and it expired in October 2024.

The record includes evidence indicating that, after the expiration of that commitment, Egal was decompensating mentally and experiencing heightened paranoia and an increase in delusional thoughts. He has also exhibited a pattern of noncompliance with his antipsychotic medication and refusal to see a psychiatrist after his previous one retired. Egal is diabetic, and the record identifies instances of refusal of insulin and other related medical care.

In March 2025, Egal was again adjudicated incompetent to stand trial on the charges relating to the incident at the mall. After that adjudication, respondent Hennepin County Attorney brought the petition for civil commitment that is the subject of this appeal. The district court held a hearing on the petition in April 2025, at which it admitted case management notes, records from Egal's living facility, and additional treatment records. The parties stipulated to the report of examiner Megan Paris, PsyD, LP, ABPP, which was also admitted into the record. Dr. Paris's report was based on many of the documents that the district court admitted. The report describes Egal's relevant psychiatric history and concludes that, because of Egal's disorder, he poses a substantial likelihood of physical harm to himself or others. The report found that Egal had not made a recent attempt to harm himself or others, but it was Dr. Paris's opinion that there is a substantial likelihood of physical harm to himself or others because he has "an inability for reasons other than indigence to obtain necessary food, clothing, shelter, or medical care as a result of the impairment."

After the hearing, the district court filed an order committing Egal as a person who poses a risk of harm due to mental illness. The district court found that Egal has schizophrenia with psychotic features, "which is a substantial psychiatric disorder of thought, mood, perception, and orientation which grossly impairs his judgment, behavior, capacity to recognize reality, and ability to reason or understand." The district court's findings included that, "[a]ccording to the records, [Egal] has a history of physical aggression, including [through the use of] a weapon, when he becomes psychiatrically deteriorated." The district court also found facts relating to Egal's recent mental decline,

increase in symptoms, and refusal of psychiatric treatment and medical care for his diabetes. And the district court found the report of Dr. Paris “credible and persuasive.” The district court then concluded that “[t]he record establishes by clear and convincing evidence [Egal], due to his impairment, poses a substantial likelihood of physical harm to himself or others as demonstrated by a recent attempt or threat to physically harm self or others” and that there was no less restrictive alternative to commitment.

Egal appeals.

DECISION

Egal argues that the district court erred in concluding that he meets the definition of a person who poses a risk of harm due to a mental illness under Minnesota Statutes section 253B.02, subdivision 17a(a) (2024). Specifically, he maintains that there is no clear and convincing evidence of “a recent attempt or threat to physically harm self or others” under subdivision 17a(a)(3) of section 253B.02, which is the basis on which the district court’s order rests. He also argues that the record does not support any other basis to conclude he meets the definition under subdivision 17a(a). *See* Minn. Stat. § 253B.02, subd. 17a(a)(1)-(4). The county asserts, on the other hand, that the record as a whole supports the district court’s determination and that the order of commitment should be affirmed.

A district court must civilly commit an individual “[i]f the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the proposed patient is a person who poses a risk of harm due to mental illness” and there is “no suitable alternative to judicial commitment.” Minn. Stat.

§ 253B.09, subd. 1(a) (2024).¹ There is no dispute here that Egal has a mental illness. The issue is whether he poses a risk of harm due to that mental illness. The fact that a person “poses a substantial likelihood of physical harm to self or others” may be shown by

(1) a failure to obtain necessary food, clothing, shelter, or medical care as a result of the impairment;

(2) an inability for reasons other than indigence to obtain necessary food, clothing, shelter, or medical care as a result of the impairment and it is more probable than not that the person will suffer substantial harm, significant psychiatric deterioration or debilitation, or serious illness, unless appropriate treatment and services are provided;

(3) a recent attempt or threat to physically harm self or others; or

(4) recent and volitional conduct involving significant damage to substantial property.

Minn. Stat. § 253B.02, subd. 17a(a)(1)-(4).

The statute also provides that, when a district court orders a person to be civilly committed under section 253B.09, subdivision 1(a), the district court “shall find the facts specifically, and separately state its conclusions of law.” Minn. Stat. § 253B.09, subd. 2(a) (2024). “[T]he findings of fact and conclusions of law shall specifically state the proposed patient’s conduct which is a basis for determining that each of the requisites for commitment is met.” *Id.*

¹ The statute defines “person who poses a risk of harm due to mental illness” as “any person who has an organic disorder of the brain or a substantial psychiatric disorder of thought, mood, perception, orientation, or memory” when that disorder “grossly impairs judgment, behavior, capacity to recognize reality, or to reason or understand, that is manifested by instances of grossly disturbed behavior or faulty perceptions,” and because of that impairment, “poses a substantial likelihood of physical harm to self or others.” Minn. Stat. § 253B.02, subd. 17a(a).

On appeal, we review the district court’s factual findings for clear error, “considering the record in the light most favorable to the findings of fact.” *In re Civ. Commitment of Breault*, 942 N.W.2d 368, 378 (Minn. App. 2020) (quotation omitted). “We review de novo whether there is clear and convincing evidence in the record to support the district court’s conclusion that [an individual] meets the standards for commitment.” *In re Thulin*, 660 N.W.2d 140, 144 (Minn. App. 2003).

Here, we cannot determine whether the district court erred in concluding that Egal is subject to civil commitment because its findings are inadequate. *See In re Civ. Commitment of Spicer*, 853 N.W.2d 803, 811 (Minn. App. 2014), *rev. denied* (Minn. Aug 25, 2015) (holding that a district court’s findings may be inadequate if they are not “meaningfully tied to its conclusions of law”). Contrary to the statute, which requires the district court to “specifically state the proposed patient’s conduct which is a basis for determining that each of the requisites for commitment is met,” Minn. Stat. § 253B.09, subd. 2(a), the district court set forth factual findings that are not tied to its legal conclusion. The district court concluded that Egal “poses a substantial likelihood of physical harm to himself or others” because of “a recent attempt or threat to physically harm self or others.” But its findings do not identify an overt “recent attempt or threat.” The district court referenced only that, “[a]ccording to the records, [Egal] has a history of physical aggression, including [through use of] a weapon, when he becomes psychiatrically deteriorated.” If this was a reference to the 2023 incident at the mall, the district court did not make any findings that the event was “recent” such that it predicts future likelihood of harm. *See In re Commitment of Leach*, No. A08-0417, 2008 WL 3291421, at *3-4 (Minn.

App. Aug. 12, 2008) (finding it proper to judge whether conduct is recent for purposes of the statute by “evaluating its value in predicting future harm” (quoting Eric S. Janus, *Civil Commitment in Minnesota* 31 (2d ed.1991))).²

The district court’s order also includes other inconsistencies between its findings and conclusion. For example, the district court found that Dr. Paris’s report was “credible and persuasive” and stated, “Dr. Paris opined, due to [his] disorder, [Egal] poses a substantial likelihood of physical harm to themselves.” But the district court’s conclusion rests on a different statutory basis than Dr. Paris’s conclusion did. Dr. Paris’s report states that there was no “recent attempt or threat to physically harm self or others,” referencing Minnesota Statutes section 253B.02, subdivision 17a(a)(3); but the district court concluded that Egal posed a substantial likelihood of harm because of a recent attempt or threat to harm. Dr. Paris also concluded that Egal has “an inability for reasons other than indigence to obtain necessary food, clothing, shelter, or medical care as a result of the impairment,” referencing subdivision 17a(a)(2); but the district court made no express findings or conclusions of law with respect to that subdivision.

Involuntary commitment is a “deprivation of liberty that a governmental entity cannot accomplish without due process of law.” *State ex rel. Doe v. Madonna*, 295 N.W.2d 356, 364 (Minn. 1980). And we have established in previous cases that “[t]he drafters of the Commitment Act clearly intended to require specificity in the findings of the trial courts,” necessitating “findings on each of the statutory requisites with a clear recitation of

² This case is nonprecedential and, therefore, not binding. We cite nonprecedential opinions as persuasive authority only. See Minn. R. Civ. App. P. 136.01, subd. 1(c).

the evidence relied upon in reaching the court’s conclusions.” *In re Danielson*, 398 N.W.2d 32, 37 (Minn. App. 1986). In relying on a different statutory basis for commitment than the examiner’s report, the district court did “not explain what evidence [it] found most persuasive or least persuasive, [or] which facts the district court found to be most important or least important.” *Spicer*, 853 N.W.2d at 811. The disconnect between the district court’s findings and legal conclusion hinders our meaningful review. *See id.* (noting that it is “particularly important” that the district court explain the evidence and facts on which it based its decision “[i]f there are inconsistent facts or testimony in the record”).

For these reasons, we remand for the district court to make additional findings of fact, in accordance with statutory requirements. On remand, the district court may, in its discretion, reopen the record to allow for the submission of more evidence. We express no opinion on the ultimate issue of whether Egal meets the statutory criteria for commitment.

Remanded.