

THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

SUPREME COURT

In Case No. 2025-0384, Grace Woodham v. New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, the court on October 15, 2025, issued the following order:

Notice of appeal is declined. See Rule 7(1)(B).

Under Supreme Court Rule 7(1)(B), the supreme court may decline to accept a notice of discretionary appeal from the superior or circuit court. No appeal, however, is declined except by unanimous vote of the court with at least three justices participating.

This matter was considered by each justice whose name appears below. If any justice who considered this matter believed the appeal should have been accepted, this case would have been accepted and scheduled for briefing.

In light of the forgoing, Grace Woodham's motion for exemption from e-filing is moot.

Declined.

Donovan, Countway, and Gould, JJ., concurred.

**Timothy A. Gudas,
Clerk**

Distribution:

Clerk, Merrimack County Superior Court, 217-2025-CV-00049

Honorable Daniel I. St. Hilaire

✓ Grace Woodham

Mary A. Trick, Esquire

Attorney General

File

The State of New Hampshire

MERRIMACK COUNTY

SUPERIOR COURT

GRACE WOODHAM

v.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Docket No.: 217-2025-CV-49

ORDER ON PETITIONER'S WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS

Petitioner, Grace Woodham, filed a writ of habeas corpus seeking her release from the New Hampshire Hospital ("NH"). The state filed a motion to dismiss. For the following reasons, Petitioner's writ is DENIED.

Legal Standard

When ruling on a motion to dismiss, the Court assumes the facts from "the plaintiff's pleadings to be true and construe[s] all reasonable inferences in the light most favorable to" the plaintiff. Clark v. N.H. Dep't of Emp't Sec., 171 N.H. 639, 645 (2019). Ultimately, the Court must engage in a threshold inquiry to determine whether the allegations in the plaintiff's pleadings are "reasonably susceptible of a construction that would permit recovery." McNamara v. Hersh, 157 N.H. 72, 73 (2008). If the allegations in the Complaint fail to provide a basis for legal relief, the Court should grant the motion to dismiss. Mentis Scis., Inc. v. Pittsburgh Networks, LLC, 173 N.H. 585, 588 (2020).

Factual Background

The Court draws the following facts from the parties' filings and undisputed background facts from the record.

The plaintiff is currently involuntarily committed to the NHH under docket number 315-2021-IN-27. In December 2024, the petitioner filed the writ of habeas corpus seeking release from NHH. The state argues that the petitioner has already challenged her admission to NHH and the NH Supreme Court upheld the decision approving the commitment made by the Probate Court. The petitioner does not dispute that an appeal was made and decided by the NH Supreme Court. She nonetheless argues that this Court should find that the decision made by the Probate Court was erroneous because a NH statute improperly allows a judge to "overrule a medical professional's medical diagnosis" which is contrary to federal law. She argues also that her Due Process rights were violated.

Analysis

A writ of habeas corpus is an extraordinary remedy that is "reserved for those questions which involve fundamental freedoms and occasions of pressing necessity where other remedies are inadequate or ineffective." In re Kerry D., 144 N.H. 146, 148 (1999) (citation and quotation marks omitted). The New Hampshire Supreme Court has noted that a writ of habeas corpus "is not a substitute for an appeal or writ of error or other similar proceedings." Springer v. Hungerford, 100 N.H. 503, 505 (1957) (*citing State v. Shattuck*, 45 N.H. 205 (1864)). In this case, the NH Supreme Court has already reviewed the petitioner's committal order. That decision is binding upon this Court and

this Court has no authority to rule otherwise. Since the Superior Court is a lower Court in this instance, there is no available legal basis for relief in this forum.

Conclusion

For the reasons stated above, as well as those articulated by the State in their motion and in their arguments, the motion to dismiss is GRANTED and the Petitioner's writ of habeas corpus is DENIED.

SO ORDERED.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dl St. Hilaire', is positioned above the printed name of the Presiding Justice.

June 10, 2025

**Hon. Daniel I. St. Hilaire
Presiding Justice**

Clerk's Notice of Decision
Document Sent to Parties
on 06/10/2025