



March 29, 1999

Ms. Lilia Ledesma-Gonzalez  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of McAllen  
P.O. Box 220  
McAllen, Texas 78505-0220

OR99-0874

Dear Ms. Gonzalez:

You have asked whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Open Records Act, chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 124575.

You assert that the requested information is excepted from disclosure based on section 552.108 of the Government Code.<sup>1</sup> Section 552.108(a)(2) excepts from disclosure information concerning an investigation that concluded in a result other than conviction or deferred adjudication. Based on the information you provided, we understand you to assert that the requested information pertains to a case that concluded in a result other than conviction or deferred adjudication. Therefore, we agree that section 552.108(a)(2) is applicable.<sup>2</sup>

However section 552.108 is inapplicable to basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. Gov't Code § 552.108(c). We believe such basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle Publishing Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App. --Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). Thus, with the exception of the basic front page offense and arrest information, you may withhold the requested information from disclosure based on section

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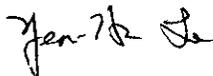
<sup>1</sup>We note that it appears that the accident report is not at issue.

<sup>2</sup>Information filed with a court is generally a matter of public record and may not be withheld from disclosure. *Star-Telegram, Inc. v. Walker*, 834 S.W.2d 54 (Tex. 1992).

552.108(a)(2).<sup>3</sup> We note that you have the discretion to release all or part of the remaining information that is not otherwise confidential by law. Gov't Code § 552.007.

We are resolving this matter with this informal letter ruling rather than with a published open records decision. This ruling is limited to the particular records at issue under the facts presented to us in this request and may not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records. If you have questions about this ruling, please contact our office.

Sincerely,



Yen-Ha Le  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

YHL/ch

Ref.: ID# 124575

Enclosures: Submitted documents

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<sup>3</sup>Some of the records at issue are medical records, access to which is governed by the Medical Practice Act (the "MPA"), article 4495b of Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes. Section 5.08 of the MPA provides:

(b) Records of the identity, diagnosis, evaluation, or treatment of a patient by a physician that are created or maintained by a physician are confidential and privileged and may not be disclosed except as provided in this section.

(c) Any person who receives information from confidential communications or records as described in this section other than the persons listed in Subsection (h) of this section who are acting on the patient's behalf may not disclose the information except to the extent that disclosure is consistent with the authorized purposes for which the information was first obtained.

Section 5.08(j)(1) provides for release of medical records upon the patient's written consent, provided that the consent specifies (1) the information to be covered by the release, (2) reasons or purposes for the release, and (3) the person to whom the information is to be released. Section 5.08(j)(3) also requires that any subsequent release of medical records be consistent with the purposes for which the governmental body obtained the records. Open Records Decision No. 565 at 7 (1990). Medical records may be released only as provided under the MPA. Open Records Decision No. 598 (1991). For your convenience, we have marked sample documents to show which are medical records subject to the MPA.

cc: Ms. Laura Pitchford  
Apex Documents  
4421 N. McCall Road  
McAllen, Texas 78504  
(w/o enclosures)