



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

March 14, 2008

Ms. Zindia Thomas
Assistant Attorney General
Public Information Coordinator
Office of the Attorney General
P.O. Box 12548
Austin, Texas 78711-2548

OR2008-03461

Dear Ms. Thomas:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 304807.

The Office of the Attorney General (the "OAG") received a request for complaints filed between November 1, 2005 to December 31, 2007 regarding Medicare Advantage. The OAG released some information to the requestor and asserts Exhibit B is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. The OAG takes no position as to the release of Exhibit C and has notified the United States Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Inspector General ("HHS") of the request and of its opportunity to object to the release of Exhibit C. We have considered the OAG's claimed exception to disclosure and have reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.108(a) excepts from disclosure "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if: (1) release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime." Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). Generally, a governmental body claiming section 552.108 must reasonably explain how and why the release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement. *See id* § 552.301(e)(1)(a); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). In this instance, the OAG explains Exhibit B relates to an ongoing criminal investigation being conducted by the OAG's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and that release of these records will compromise the investigation of this matter. Based on the OAG's representations and our review of the records, we agree the OAG may withhold Exhibit B under section 552.108(a)(1). *See Houston Chronicle Publ'g*

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) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases).

As for Exhibit C, because we have not received no comments from HHS, the OAG must release Exhibit C.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must file suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such a challenge, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records promptly pursuant to section 552.221(a) of the Government Code or file a lawsuit challenging this ruling pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code. If the governmental body fails to do one of these things, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can challenge that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the Office of the Attorney General at (512) 475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,



Yen-Ha Le
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

YHL/sdk

Ref: ID# 304807

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Ms. Valerie S. Farwell
Cappolino, Dodd & Krebs, LLP
312 South Houston Avenue
Cameron, Texas 76520
(w/o enclosures)