



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

July 18, 2012

Ms. Cheryl K. Byles
Assistant City Attorney
City of Fort Worth
1000 Throckmorton Street
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2012-11119

Dear Ms. Byles:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 463990 (PIR No. W017819).

The City of Fort Worth (the "city") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You state some information has been released. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exception and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This exception encompasses information made confidential by other statutes, such as section 773.091 of the Health and Safety Code, which provides in relevant part:

- (a) A communication between certified emergency medical services personnel or a physician providing medical supervision and a patient that is made in the course of providing emergency medical services to the patient is confidential and privileged and may not be disclosed except as provided by this chapter.

(b) Records of the identity, evaluation or treatment of a patient by emergency medical services personnel or by a physician providing medical supervision that are created by the emergency medical services personnel or physician or maintained by an emergency medical services provider are confidential and privileged and may not be disclosed except as provided by this chapter.

...

(g) The privilege of confidentiality under this section does not extend to information regarding the presence, nature of injury or illness, age, sex, occupation, and city of residence of a patient who is receiving emergency medical services.

Health & Safety Code § 773.091(a)-(b), (g). Except for the information specified in section 773.091(g), emergency medical services (“EMS”) records are deemed confidential under section 773.091 and may only be released in accordance with chapter 773 of the Health and Safety Code. *See id.* §§ 773.091-.094. We agree the submitted records reflect the treatment of a patient by EMS personnel. Thus, the submitted information constitutes EMS records that are subject to chapter 773 of the Health and Safety Code.

We note, however, records that are confidential under section 773.091 may be disclosed to “any person who bears a written consent of the patient or other persons authorized to act on the patient’s behalf for the release of confidential information.” *Id.* §§ 773.092(e)(4), .093. Section 773.093 provides a consent for release of EMS records must specify (1) the information or records to be covered by the release; (2) the reasons or purpose for the release; and (3) the person to whom the information is to be released.

You state the city has not received written consent pursuant to section 773.093. However, if the city receives proper consent, the submitted EMS records must be released in their entirety in accordance with chapter 773 of the Health and Safety Code. If the city does not receive proper consent, then, with the exception of information subject to section 773.091(g) of the Health and Safety Code, which is not confidential and must be released, the submitted EMS records must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 773.091(b) of the Health and Safety Code.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular information 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 information or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php, or call the Office of the Attorney General’s Open Government Hotline, toll free,

at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Cindy Nettles".

Cindy Nettles
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CN/dls

Ref: ID# 463990

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)