



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

September 24, 2012

Ms. Connie Crawford
Assistant County Attorney
El Paso County Hospital District
4815 Alameda Avenue
8th Floor, Suite B
El Paso, Texas 79905

OR2012-15169

Dear Ms. Crawford:

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# 467907.

The El Paso County Hospital District (the "district") received a request for information pertaining to the winning bid for a specified request for proposals. Although the district takes no position regarding whether the submitted information is excepted from disclosure, you state release of the requested information may implicate the proprietary interests of WM Healthcare Solutions, Inc. ("WM"). Accordingly, you provide documentation showing you have notified WM of the request and its right to submit arguments to this office. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permits governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain applicability of exception in the Act in certain circumstances). We have reviewed the submitted information.

We first note an interested third party is allowed ten business days after the date of its receipt of the governmental body's notice to submit its reasons, if any, as to why information relating to that party should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this ruling, we have not received comments from WM. Thus, we have no basis to conclude WM has a protected proprietary interest in any of the submitted information. *See id.* § 552.110(a)-(b); Open Records Decision Nos. 661 at 5-6 (1999) (to prevent disclosure of commercial or financial information, party must show by specific factual evidence, not conclusory or generalized allegations, that release of requested information would cause that

party substantial competitive harm), 552 at 5 (1990) (party must establish *prima facie* case that information is trade secret), 542 at 3. Accordingly, the district may not withhold any of the information at issue on the basis of any proprietary interest WM may have in the information.

We next note portions of the submitted information may be protected by copyright. A custodian of public records must comply with copyright law and is not required to furnish copies of records that are copyrighted. Open Records Decision No. 180 at 3 (1977). However, a governmental body must allow inspection of copyrighted materials unless an exception applies to the information. *Id.*; see Open Records Decision No. 109 (1975). If a member of the public wishes to make copies of copyrighted materials, the person must do so unassisted by the governmental body. In making copies, the member of the public assumes the duty of compliance with copyright law and the risk of a copyright infringement suit. As no exceptions to disclosure have been raised, the submitted information must be released to the requestor, but any information that is protected by copyright may only be released in accordance with copyright law.

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,



Misty Haberer Barham
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MHB/som

Ref: ID# 467907

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

Mr. Jeff Gloyd
Senior Manager, Community Programs
WM Healthcare Solutions, Inc.
1001 Fannin Street, Suite 4000
Houston, Texas 77002
(w/o enclosures)