



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

July 23, 2013

Ms. Zeena Angadicheril
Office of General Counsel
University of Texas System
201 West Seventh Street
Austin, Texas 78701-2902

OR2013-12688

Dear Ms. Angadicheril:

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# 494080 (UT OGC #149896).

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (the "university") received a request for a specific compliance report regarding inaccurate billing practices. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim 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. Section 552.101 encompasses confidentiality provisions such as section 161.032 of the Health and Safety Code, which provides in relevant part:

(c) Records, information, or reports of a . . . compliance officer and records, information, or reports provided by a . . . compliance officer to the governing body of a public hospital, hospital district, or hospital authority are not subject to disclosure under [the Act].

...

(e) The records, information, and reports received or maintained by a compliance officer retain the protection provided by this section only if the

records, information, or reports are received, created, or maintained in the exercise of a proper function of the compliance officer as provided by the Office of Inspector General of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

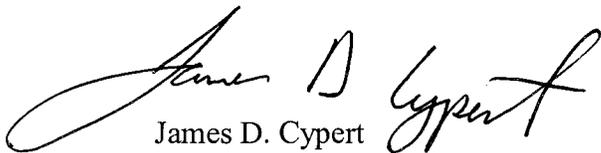
(f) This section . . . do[es] not apply to records made or maintained in the regular course of business by a hospital, . . . university medical center or health science center, [or] hospital district[.]

Health & Safety Code § 161.032(c), (e), (f). You inform us the submitted information relates to a complaint that was made to the university's Office of Institutional Compliance ("OIC"). You state the OIC initiated an investigation of the complaint pursuant to the university's Institutional Healthcare Billing Compliance Program. You indicate the information at issue was created for and is part of the compliance file for the complaint at issue and is not maintained in the regular course of business. *Cf. Texarkana Mem'l Hosp., Inc. v. Jones*, 551 S.W.2d 33, 35 (Tex. 1977) (defining records made or maintained in regular course of business). Based on your representations and our review, we conclude the submitted information consists of records, information, or reports of a compliance officer acting under subchapter D of chapter 161 of the Health and Safety Code. Therefore, the university must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 161.032 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.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml, 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 may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



James D. Cypert
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JDC/ac

Ref: ID# 494080

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)