



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

April 3, 2014

Mr. David V. Overcash  
Counsel for the City of Anna  
Wolfe, Tidwell & McCoy, LLP  
2591 Dallas Parkway, Suite 205  
Frisco, Texas 75034

OR2014-05499

Dear Mr. Overcash:

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# 518672 (City File No. C03029PIR20140109-01).

The Anna Police Department (the "department"), which you represent, received a request for the crash report and/or incident report pertaining to a specified automobile accident, including photographs, videos, measurements, notes, drafts, and witness statements. You state you have released some information, including the CR-3 accident report, to the requestor. *See* Transp. Code § 550.065(c)(4) (governmental body must release accident report to a person who provides two of the following three items of information: (1) date of the accident; (2) name of any person involved in the accident; and (3) specific location of the accident). You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, 552.130, and 552.136 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information. You also inform us you have notified an interested third party of the request and of the person's right to submit arguments to this office as to why the submitted information should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.304 (interested party may submit written comments regarding availability of requested information).

Initially, we note some of the submitted information consists of court-filed documents subject to section 552.022 of the Government Code. Section 552.022(a)(17) provides for the required public disclosure of "information that is also contained in a public court record,"

unless it is “made confidential under [the Act] or other law[.]” *Id.* § 552.022(a)(17). The submitted information includes search warrants and orders of assignments signed by a magistrate that are subject to section 552.022(a)(17) and must be released unless they are confidential under the Act or other law. Although you assert this information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code, this section is discretionary and does not make information confidential under the Act. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 665 at 2 n.5 (2000) (discretionary exceptions generally), 177 at 3 (1977) (governmental body may waive statutory predecessor to section 552.108). Therefore, the department may not withhold the information subject to section 552.022 under section 552.108. As you raise no further exceptions against the disclosure of this information, which we have indicated, it must be released. However, we will address your arguments under section 552.108 for the remaining information that is not subject to section 552.022.

Section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . 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(a)(1) must reasonably explain how and why the release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state CD numbers 1 through 6, and the information you have marked in CD number 7, relate to a pending criminal investigation. Based upon your representation and our review, we conclude that the release of the information at issue would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See Houston Chronicle Publ’g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases), *writ ref’d n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). Therefore, with the exception of the information subject to section 552.022 of the Government Code, the department may withhold CD numbers 1 through 6, and the information you have marked in CD number 7, under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.<sup>1</sup>

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 information protected by other statutes, such as the Medical Practice Act (the “MPA”), subtitle B of title 3 of the Occupations Code, which governs access to medical records. *See* Occ. Code §§ 151.001-168.202. Section 159.002 of the MPA provides, in part:

(a) A communication between a physician and a patient, relative to or in connection with any professional services as a physician to the patient, is

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<sup>1</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure of this information.

confidential and privileged and may not be disclosed except as provided by this chapter.

(b) A record of the identity, diagnosis, evaluation, or treatment of a patient by a physician that is created or maintained by a physician is confidential and privileged and may not be disclosed except as provided by this chapter.

(c) A person who receives information from a confidential communication or record as described by this chapter, other than a person listed in Section 159.004 who is 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.

*Id.* § 159.002(a)-(c). Information subject to the MPA includes both medical records and information obtained from those medical records. *See id.* §§ 159.002, .004; Open Records Decision No. 598 (1991). This office has concluded the protection afforded by section 159.002 extends only to records created by either a physician or someone under the supervision of a physician. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 487 (1987), 370 (1983), 343 (1982). We have also found when a file is created as the result of a hospital stay, all the documents in the file relating to diagnosis and treatment constitute physician-patient communications or “[r]ecords of the identity, diagnosis, evaluation, or treatment of a patient by a physician that are created or maintained by a physician.” Open Records Decision No. 546 (1990). Upon review, we find the information we have indicated consists of records of the identity, diagnosis, evaluation, or treatment of a patient by a physician that was created by a physician or someone under the supervision of a physician. Therefore, the department must withhold the information we have indicated in CD number 7 under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with the MPA.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides information relating to a motor vehicle operator's license, driver's license, motor vehicle title or registration, or a personal identification document issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release. Gov't Code § 552.130(a). Upon review, we find the department must withhold the motor vehicle record information you have marked, and the additional motor vehicle record information we have indicated, in CD number 7 under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

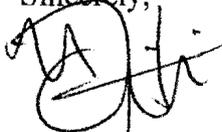
In summary, the department must release the information we have indicated under section 552.022(a)(17) of the Government Code. The department may withhold CD numbers 1 through 6, and the information you have marked in CD number 7, under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The department must withhold the information we have indicated in CD number 7 under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with the MPA. The department must withhold the information you have marked, and the additional information we have indicated, in CD number 7 under

section 552.130 of the Government Code. The department must release the remaining information.<sup>2</sup>

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](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,



Thana Hussaini  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

TH/som

Ref: ID# 518672

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

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<sup>2</sup>We note the information being released contains the requestor's client's motor vehicle information, to which the requestor has a right of access. *See generally* Gov't Code § 552.023(a) (person or person's authorized representative has special right of access, beyond right of general public, to information held by governmental body that relates to person and is protected from public disclosure by laws intended to protect person's privacy interests); Open Records Decision No. 481 at 4 (1987) (privacy theories not implicated when individual requests information concerning himself). Section 552.130(c) of the Government Code allows a governmental body to redact the information described in subsection 552.130(a) without the necessity of seeking a decision from the attorney general. *See* Gov't Code § 552.130(c). If a governmental body redacts such information, it must notify the requestor in accordance with section 552.130(e). *See id.* § 552.130(d), (e). Thus, if the department receives another request for this same information from a person who does not have such a right of access, section 552.130(c) authorizes the department to redact the requestor's client's motor vehicle record information with requesting a ruling from this office.