



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

March 7, 2016

Ms. Susan Camp-Lee  
Sheets & Crossfield, P.C.  
Counsel for the City of Round Rock  
309 East Main Street  
Round Rock, Texas 78664-5246

OR2016-05293

Dear Ms. Camp-Lee:

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# 600774.

The City of Round Rock (the "city"), which you represent, received a request for information pertaining to a specified accident.<sup>1</sup> You state the city released some information to the requestor. 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. This section encompasses information made confidential by other statutes, including section 773.091 of the Health and Safety Code. Section 773.091 of the Health and Safety Code, provides in relevant part:

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<sup>1</sup>We note the city sought and received clarification of the information requested. *See* Gov't Code § 552.222 (providing if request for information is unclear, governmental body may ask requestor to clarify request); *see also* *City of Dallas v. Abbott*, 304 S.W.3d 380, 387 (Tex. 2010) (holding that when a governmental entity, acting in good faith, requests clarification or narrowing of an unclear or over-broad request for public information, the ten-day period to request an attorney general ruling is measured from the date the request is clarified or narrowed).

(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(b), (g). Except for the information specified in section 773.091(g), Emergency Medical Service (“EMS”) records are deemed confidential under section 773.091. *See id.* §§ 773.091. Upon review, we find the submitted information consists of EMS records subject to chapter 773. Thus, with the exception of the information subject to section 773.091(g), which is not confidential under section 773.091, the city must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 773.091(b) of the Health and Safety Code.<sup>2</sup>

You seek to withhold the information subject to section 773.091(g) of the Health and Safety Code pursuant to the Medical Practices Act (the “MPA”), subtitle B of title 3 of the Occupations Code, which governs the release of medical records. Section 552.101 of the Government code also encompasses section 159.002 of the Occupations Code, which provides, in relevant part:

(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.

Occ. Code § 159.002(a)-(c). 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).* Upon review, we find you have not demonstrated the information subject to

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<sup>2</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we do not address your remaining arguments against disclosure of this information.

section 773.091(g) is confidential under the MPA. Accordingly, the city may not withhold the information subject to section 773.091(g) under section 552.101 of the Government Code on that basis.

We also address your argument that the information subject to section 773.091(g) of the Health and Safety Code is protected by common-law privacy. Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy, which protects information that is (1) highly intimate or embarrassing, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). To demonstrate the applicability of common-law privacy, both prongs of this test must be satisfied. *Id.* at 681-82. Types of information considered intimate and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court are delineated in *Industrial Foundation*. *Id.* at 683. Upon review, we find none of the information subject to section 773.091(g) of the Health and Safety Code is highly intimate or embarrassing and of no legitimate public interest. Accordingly, none of this information may be withheld under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy.

In summary, with the exception of the information subject to section 773.091(g), which must be released, the city must withhold the submitted information 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.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,



Katelyn Blackburn-Rader  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

KB-R/bw

Ref: ID# 600774

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)