



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

January 29, 2014

Ms. Linda Pemberton
Paralegal
Office of the City Attorney
City of Killeen
P.O. Box 1329
Killeen, Texas 76540-1329

OR2014-01716

Dear Ms. Pemberton:

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# 512191 (Killeen ID# W011896).

The Killeen Police Department (the "department") received a request for records regarding a named individual. You state the department is releasing some information to the requestor. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note a portion of the submitted information, which we have marked, is not responsive to the present request for information because it does not pertain to the named individual. This ruling does not address the public availability of non-responsive information, and the department need not release non-responsive information in response to this request.

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 protected by other statutes. Section 261.201 of the Family Code provides, in relevant part, as follows:

(a) [T]he following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under Chapter 552, Government Code, and may be disclosed only for purposes consistent with this code and applicable federal or state law or under rules adopted by an investigating agency:

(1) a report of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect made under this chapter and the identity of the person making the report; and

(2) except as otherwise provided in this section, the files, reports, records, communications, audiotapes, videotapes, and working papers used or developed in an investigation under this chapter or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

...

(k) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), an investigating agency, other than the [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services] or the Texas Youth Commission, on request, shall provide to the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of a child who is the subject of reported abuse or neglect, or to the child if the child is at least 18 years of age, information concerning the reported abuse or neglect that would otherwise be confidential under this section. The investigating agency shall withhold information under this subsection if the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of the child requesting the information is alleged to have committed the abuse or neglect.

(l) Before a child or a parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of a child may inspect or copy a record or file concerning the child under Subsection (k), the custodian of the record or file must redact:

(1) any personally identifiable information about a victim or witness under 18 years of age unless that victim or witness is:

(A) the child who is the subject of the report; or

(B) another child of the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative requesting the information;

(2) any information that is excepted from required disclosure under [the Act], or other law; and

(3) the identity of the person who made the report.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a), (k), (l). You state the information related to report number 07-014488 was used or developed in an investigation of alleged child neglect. *See id.* § 261.001(1) (defining “neglect” for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code); *see also id.* § 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of this section as person under 18 years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had disabilities of minority removed for general purposes). Accordingly, we find this information is subject to chapter 261 of the Family Code. You do not indicate the department has adopted a rule governing the release of this information. Therefore, we assume no such regulation exists. Given that assumption, we conclude the department must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(a) of the Family Code. *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute).

We note, however, the requestor has provided an authorization for release form signed by the named individual, who is a parent of the child victims listed in the remaining information related to report number 07-014488. Further, the parent is not alleged to have committed the alleged neglect. Thus, pursuant to section 261.201(k), the remaining information at issue may not be withheld from this requestor under section 552.101 of the Government Code on the basis of section 261.201(a). *See id.* § 261.201(k). However, section 261.201(l)(2) states any information that is excepted from required disclosure under the Act or other law must still be withheld from disclosure. *Id.* § 261.201(l)(2). Accordingly, we will consider whether any of the remaining information at issue is otherwise excepted under the Act.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses the Medical Practice Act (“MPA”), subtitle B of title 3 of the Occupations Code, which governs release of medical records. *See* Occ. Code §§ 151.001-168.202. Section 159.002 of the MPA provides, in relevant 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 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. 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 the information we have marked consists of confidential medical records. Accordingly, the department must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with the MPA.

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. This office has found that personal financial information not relating to a financial transaction between an individual and a governmental body is generally intimate or embarrassing. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 545 (1990) (deferred compensation information, participation in voluntary investment program, election of optional insurance coverage, mortgage payments, assets, bills, and credit history). This office has also found a compilation of an individual's criminal history is highly embarrassing information, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person. *Cf. United States Dep't of Justice v. Reporters Comm. for Freedom of the Press*, 489 U.S. 749, 764 (1989). Furthermore, we find a compilation of a private citizen's criminal history is generally not of legitimate concern to the public. Upon review, we find the information we have marked satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. Accordingly, the department must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

Section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information concerning an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication. *See* Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(2). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(2) must demonstrate the requested information relates to a criminal investigation that has concluded in a final result other than a conviction or deferred adjudication. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A)

(governmental body must provide comments explaining why exceptions raised should apply to information requested). You state report numbers 03-008048, 06-008354, 08-000736, 08-001570, and 08-002969 consist of closed cases that did not result in convictions or deferred adjudications. Based on these representations and our review, we agree section 552.108(a)(2) is applicable to report numbers 03-008048, 06-008354, 08-000736, 08-001570, and 08-002969.

However, section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. *Id.* § 552.108(c). Basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle Publishing Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). *See also* Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). Thus, with the exception of the basic information, which you state you have released, the department may withhold report numbers 03-008048, 06-008354, 08-000736, 08-001570, and 08-002969 under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides information relating to a motor vehicle operator's license or driver's license issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release.¹ *See* Gov't Code § 552.130(a)(1). Accordingly, the department must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, the department must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code, the MPA, and common-law privacy. With the exception of the basic information, which must be released, the department may withhold report numbers 03-008048, 06-008354, 08-000736, 08-001570, and 08-002969 under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code. The department must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The department must release the remaining information.²

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.

¹The Office of the attorney general will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 471 (1987), 470 (1987).

²We note the requestor has a special right of access to some of the information being released. Accordingly, if the department receives another request for this information, it must again seek a ruling from this office.

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,



Kristi L. Wilkins
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KLW/bhf

Ref: ID# 512191

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)