



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

April 22, 2014

Ms. Elizabeth Hanshaw Winn
Assistant County Attorney
County of Travis
P.O. Box 1748
Austin, Texas 78767

OR2014-06477

Dear Ms. Winn:

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# 520259.

The Travis County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for requestor's drug screen results. 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 information protected by other statutes, such as 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 that is 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. The information you seek to withhold consists of a report of the results of a drug test. We note section 159.001 of the MPA defines "patient" as "a person who, to receive medical care, consults with or is seen by a physician." *Id.* § 159.001(3). Because the individual at issue in the report did not receive medical care in the administration of the drug test, this individual is not a patient for purposes of section 159.002. Thus, we find you have not demonstrated the information at issue consists of a communication between a physician and a patient; records of the identity, diagnosis, evaluation, or treatment of a patient; or information obtained from such communications or records. *See id.* § 159.002(a)-(c). Therefore, the sheriff's office may not withhold the any of the information at issue under section 552.101 of the Government Code on the basis of the MPA. As you raise no other exceptions against disclosure, the submitted information must be released.

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,



Thana Hussaini
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

TH/som

Ref: ID# 520259

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)