



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 27, 2015

Ms. Lauren Dahlstein
Staff Attorney
State Board of Dental Examiners
333 Guadalupe, Tower 3, Suite 800
Austin, Texas 78701

OR2015-17936

Dear Ms. Dahlstein:

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# 577586.

The State Board of Dental Examiners (the "board") received a request for records pertaining to a named dental practitioner, including complaints, investigations, and disciplinary actions. You state the board has released some of the requested information. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code.¹ 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."

¹We note the board did not comply with section 552.301 of the Government Code in requesting this decision. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(b). Nonetheless, because section 552.101 of the Government Code can provide a compelling reason to overcome the presumption of openness, we will consider its applicability to the submitted information. *See id.* §§ 552.007, .302, .352.

Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses information made confidential by other statutes, including section 254.006 of the Occupations Code, which states:

(a) Except as provided by this section, the investigation files and other records of the board are public records and open to public inspection at reasonable times.

(b) Investigation files and other records are confidential, except the board shall inform the license holder of the specific allegations against the license holder. The board may share investigation files and other records with another state regulatory agency or a local, state, or federal law enforcement agency.

(c) The exception from public disclosure of investigation files and records provided by this section does not apply to the disclosure of a disciplinary action of the board, including:

- (1) the revocation or suspension of a license;
- (2) the imposition of a fine on a license holder;
- (3) the placement on probation with conditions of a license holder whose license has been suspended;
- (4) the reprimand of a license holder; or
- (5) the issuance of a warning letter to a license holder.

Occ. Code § 254.006. You state the submitted information consists of a board investigation file created in response to a complaint filed against a dentist licensed by the board. You assert subsection 254.006(c) is not applicable to any of the information at issue. Therefore, based on your representations and our review of the information at issue, we conclude the submitted information is confidential under section 254.006(b) of the Occupations Code and the board must withhold the information under section 552.101 of the Government 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,



Cindy Nettles
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CN/dls

Ref: ID# 577586

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)