



February 20, 2015

Ms. Maureen Franz  
Deputy Chief Counsel  
Texas Health and Human Services Commission  
P.O. Box 13247  
Austin, Texas 78711

OR2015-03398

Dear Ms. Franz:

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# 554740.

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (the "commission") received a request for (1) a list of Medicaid providers currently on payment hold, (2) the dollar amount on hold with each of these providers, and (3) the reason for the hold on each of these providers. The commission indicates it does not have information responsive to some of the request.<sup>1</sup> The commission claims the responsive information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception the commission claims and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Act does not require a governmental body to release information that did not exist when a request for information was received or to prepare new information in response to a request. *See Econ. Opportunities Dev. Corp. v. Bustamante*, 562 S.W.2d 266, 267-68 (Tex. Civ. App.—San Antonio 1978, writ dismissed); Open Records Decision Nos. 605 at 2 (1992), 452 at 3 (1986), 362 at 2 (1983).

<sup>2</sup>We assume the "representative sample" of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

The commission states the information it has marked is not responsive to the instant request for information. This ruling does not address the public availability of non-responsive information, and the commission is not required to 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, including section 531.1021 of the Government Code, which provides in relevant part:

(g) All information and materials subpoenaed or compiled by the [commission’s Office of the Inspector General (“OIG”)] in connection with an audit or investigation or by the office of the attorney general in connection with a Medicaid fraud investigation are confidential and not subject to disclosure under [the Act], and not subject to disclosure, discovery, subpoena, or other means of legal compulsion for their release to anyone other than the [OIG] or the attorney general or their employees or agents involved in the audit or investigation conducted by the [OIG] or the attorney general, except that this information may be disclosed to the state auditor’s office, law enforcement agencies, and other entities as permitted by other law.

(h) A person who receives information under Subsection (g) may disclose the information only in accordance with Subsection (g) and in a manner that is consistent with the authorized purpose for which the person first received the information.

*Id.* § 531.1021(g), (h). The commission states the responsive information was compiled by the OIG in connection with investigations of alleged Medicaid fraud currently being conducted by the OIG. Based on these representations and our review, we conclude the commission must withhold the responsive information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 531.1021(g) of the Government Code.

The commission asks this office to issue a previous determination permitting it to withhold OIG investigatory records under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 531.1021(g) of the Government Code without seeking a ruling from this office. *See id.* § 552.301(a) (allowing governmental body to withhold information subject to previous determination); Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001) (listing elements of second type of previous determination under section 552.301(a) of the Government Code). We decline to issue such a previous determination at this time. Accordingly, this letter ruling is limited to the particular records 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 records 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Wheelus', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David L. Wheelus  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

DLW/bhf

Ref: ID# 554740

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)