



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

December 21, 2016

Ms. Shannon C. Francis
Assistant County Attorney
Williamson County
405 M.L.K. Street, #7
Georgetown, Texas 78626

OR2016-28170

Dear Ms. Francis:

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# 639259.

Williamson County (the "county") received a request for a specified mental health assessment. 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 public 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 made confidential by other statutes, such as section 611.002 of the Health and Safety Code. Section 611.002 pertains to mental health records and provides, in pertinent part,


- (a) Communications between a patient and a professional, and records of the identity, diagnosis, evaluation, or treatment of a patient that are created or maintained by a professional, are confidential.
- (b) Confidential communications or records may not be disclosed except as provided by Section 611.004 or 611.0045.

Health & Safety Code § 611.002(a)-(b); *see id.* § 611.001 (defining “patient” and “professional”). Section 611.001 defines a “professional” as (1) a person authorized to practice medicine, (2) a person licensed or certified by the state to diagnose, evaluate or treat mental or emotional conditions or disorders, or (3) a person the patient reasonably believes is authorized, licensed, or certified. *Id.* § 611.001(2). Upon review, we find the submitted information consists of a mental health record. Accordingly, the county must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 611.002 of the Health and Safety Code.¹

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,



April Philley
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

AP/akg

Ref: ID# 639259

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

¹As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of the information.