



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 15, 2017

Mr. Andrew Devine  
Senior Associate Attorney  
Parkland Health & Hospital System  
5201 Harry Hines Boulevard  
Dallas, Texas 75235

OR2017-18571

Dear Mr. Devine:

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# 671290 (DCHD#17-45).

The Dallas County Hospital District d/b/a Parkland Health and Hospital System (the "system") received a request for four categories of information pertaining to the system's work with IBM Watson Health. Although you take no position as to whether the submitted information is excepted under the Act, you state release of this information may implicate the proprietary interests of IBM Corporation and IBM Watson Health (collectively "IBM"). Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, you notified IBM of the request for information and of its right to submit arguments to this office as to why the information at issue should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permits governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain applicability of exception in the Act in certain circumstances). We have reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note you have not submitted any information responsive to the request for information pertaining to meetings with IBM. To the extent any information responsive to this portion of the request existed on the date the system received the request, we assume the system has released it. If the system has not released any such information, it must do so at this time. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301(a), .302; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 664 (2000) (if governmental body concludes no exceptions apply to requested information, it must release information as soon as possible).

An interested third party is allowed ten business days after the date of its receipt of the governmental body's notice under section 552.305(d) to submit its reasons, if any, as to why

information relating to that party should be withheld from public disclosure. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this letter, we have not received comments from IBM explaining why the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude IBM has protected proprietary interests in the submitted information. *See id.* § 552.110; Open Records Decision Nos. 661 at 5-6 (1999) (to prevent disclosure of commercial or financial information, party must show by specific factual evidence, not conclusory or generalized allegations, that release of requested information would cause that party substantial competitive harm), 552 at 5 (1990) (party must establish *prima facie* case that information is trade secret), 542 at 3. Accordingly, the system may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest IBM may have in the information.

We note some of the materials at issue may be protected by copyright. A custodian of public records must comply with the copyright law and is not required to furnish copies of records that are copyrighted. Open Records Decision No. 180 at 3 (1977). A governmental body must allow inspection of copyrighted materials unless an exception applies to the information. *Id.*; *see* Open Records Decision No. 109 (1975). If a member of the public wishes to make copies of copyrighted materials, the person must do so unassisted by the governmental body. In making copies, the member of the public assumes the duty of compliance with the copyright law and the risk of a copyright infringement suit. Accordingly, the system must release the submitted information, but may only release any copyrighted information in accordance with copyright law.

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](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,



Ramsey A. Abarca  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

RAA/eb

Ref: ID# 671290

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

2 Third Parties  
(w/o enclosures)