



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 29, 2017

Mr. Jonathan Miles
Open Records Attorney
Texas Health and Human Services Commission
P.O. Box 13247
Austin, Texas 78711

OR2017-19767

Dear Mr. Miles:

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# 673448 (HHSC Reference No. 12890).

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (the "commission") received a request for information pertaining to a specified investigation of a named individual. You state the commission released some information to the requestor. 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. 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 [OIG] in connection with an audit, inspection, 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, inspection, 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). You state the submitted information was compiled by the OIG in connection with an investigation concerning alleged Medicaid and other health and human services fraud and abuse. Based on your representation and our review, we find the commission must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 531.1021(g) of the Government Code.

Finally, you ask this office to issue a previous determination permitting the commission to withhold information under section 531.1021(g) of the Government Code in conjunction with section 552.101 of the Government Code without the necessity of requesting a decision under section 552.301 of the Government Code. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(a) (allowing a 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 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,



Patrick P. Mehaffy
Attorney
Open Records Division

PPM/eb

Ref: ID# 673448

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)