



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

May 24, 2019

Ms. Dylbia L. Jeffries Vega
Civil Legal Division
Cameron County
1100 East Monroe Street
Brownsville, Texas 78520

OR2019-13879

Dear Ms. Vega:

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# 767109.

The Cameron County Public Health Department (the "county") received a request for information pertaining to an incident where diners at a restaurant became ill. You state the county has released some information. 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. Section 552.101 encompasses information other statutes make confidential, such as section 81.046(b) of the Health and Safety Code, which provides as follows:

(b) Reports, records, and information relating to cases or suspected cases of diseases or health conditions are not public information under [the Act], and may not be released or made public on subpoena or otherwise except as provided by Subsections (c), (d), and (f).

Health & Safety Code § 81.046(b). In Open Records Decision No. 577 (1990), this office concluded any information acquired or created during an investigation under chapter 81 of the Health & Safety Code is confidential and may not be released unless an exception set out in the statute applies. *See* ORD 577; Health & Safety Code § 81.046(b)-(d), (f). We note the submitted information relates to cases or suspected cases of food borne illness reported to the county. Thus, we find section 81.046 governs the release of the submitted information. None of the release provisions of section 81.046 appear to be applicable. Accordingly, the county must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 81.046(b) 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,



Kelly McWethy
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KSM/mo

Ref: ID# 767109

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

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