



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

January 30, 2020

Mr. Jonathan Miles
Open Records Attorney
Texas Health and Human Services Commission
P.O. Box 13247
Austin, Texas 78711-3247

OR2020-02900

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# 809134 (Ref. No. 20380).

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (the "commission") received a request for certain records pertaining to a named individual. 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 section 576.005 of the Health and Safety Code which provides that "[r]ecords of a mental health facility that directly or indirectly identify a present, former, or proposed patient are confidential unless disclosure is permitted by other state law." Health & Safety Code § 576.005. You state the submitted information constitutes a record of a mental health facility that would directly or indirectly identify a patient of the facility. *See id.* § 571.003(12), (16). Based upon this representation and our review, we find the confidentiality provision of section 576.005 applies to the information at issue. We are unaware of any other state law that would permit disclosure of this information, in this instance. Accordingly, the commission must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 576.005 of the Health and Safety Code.

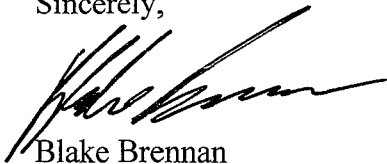
Finally, although you ask this office to issue a previous determination permitting the commission to withhold records of a mental health facility, we note that in Open Records Letter No. 2019-15662 (2019) this office already issued a previous determination

authorizing the commission to withhold records of a mental health facility under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 576.005 of the Health and Safety Code. *See* Gov't Code § 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).

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 <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open-government/members-public/what-expect-after-ruling-issued> or call the OAG's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Public Information Act may be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the OAG, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Blake Brennan
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

BBX/rm

Ref: ID# 809134

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)