



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 29, 2020

Ms. Jena R. Abel
Deputy General Counsel
Texas Board of Nursing
333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 3-460
Austin, Texas 78701

OR2020-18911

Dear Ms. Abel:

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# 839315 (BON Ref. No. 20-20).

The Texas Board of Nursing (the "board") received a request for medical records regarding the requestor's client. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exception 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. This section encompasses section 301.466 of the Occupations Code, which provides, in part, as follow:

(a) A complaint and investigation concerning a nurse under this subchapter[,] all information and material compiled by the board in connection with the complaint and investigation, and the information described by Subsection (d) are:

(1) confidential and not subject to disclosure under [the Act]; and

(2) not subject to disclosure, discovery, subpoena, or other means of legal compulsion for release to anyone other than the board or a board employee or agent involved in license holder discipline.

(b) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), information regarding a complaint and an investigation may be disclosed to:

- (1) a person involved with the board in a disciplinary action against the nurse;
- (2) a nursing licensing or disciplinary board in another jurisdiction;
- (3) a peer assistance program approved by the board under Chapter 467, Health and Safety Code;
- (4) a law enforcement agency; or
- (5) a person engaged in bona fide research, if all information identifying a specific individual has been deleted.

(c) The filing of formal charges against a nurse by the board, the nature of those charges, disciplinary proceedings of the board, and final disciplinary actions, including warnings and reprimands, by the board are not confidential and are subject to disclosure in accordance with [the Act].

Occ. Code § 301.466(a)-(c). You state the board created or compiled the submitted information as part of an investigation it conducted. Based upon this representation, we agree the submitted information is confidential under section 301.466(a). You represent the requestor is not entitled to receive this information under section 301.466(b), and the information at issue does not fall under section 301.466(c). Accordingly, we conclude the board must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 301.466(a) of the Occupations 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,

James M. Graham
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JMG/jm

Ref: ID# 839315

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)