



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 10, 2020

Mr. Neal Falgoust  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Austin  
P.O. Box 1088  
Austin, Texas 78767-8828

OR2020-19879

Dear Mr. Falgoust:

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# 839295 (PIR# C068950).

The City of Austin (the "city") received a request for documents and communications pertaining to a specified panel from a defined period of time. You claim some of 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 representative sample of information.<sup>1</sup>

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 made confidential by other statutes, such as section 81.046 of the Health and Safety Code, which provides in part, as follows:

- (a) Reports, records, and information received from any source, including from a federal agency or from another state, furnished to a public health district, a health authority, a local health department, or the [Texas Department of State Health Services] that relate to cases of suspected cases

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<sup>1</sup> We assume the "representative sample" of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

of diseases or health conditions are confidential and may be used only for the purposes of this chapter.

(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(a)-(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 and 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). You state the information you marked was created by or provided to Austin Public Health, which is authorized to conduct an investigation under chapter 81 of the Health and Safety Code. Based upon your representations and our review, we agree the information you marked is subject to section 81.046. You state the release provisions of section 81.046 are not applicable. Thus, the city must withhold the information it marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 81.046 of the Health and Safety Code. The city must release the remaining information.

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,

Kimbell Kesling  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

KK/jm

Ref: ID# 839295

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)