



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

October 15, 2020

Ms. Yvette T. Yarbrough
Assistant General Counsel
Texas Medical Board
P.O. Box 2018
Austin, Texas 78768-2018

OR2020-26083

Dear Ms. Yarbrough:

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# 848959 (TMB Ref. No. 31375).

The Texas Medical Board (the "board") received a request for a list of e-mail addresses of all primary care physicians, general practitioners, and endocrinologists in the state.¹ You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.137, and 552.139 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.²

Initially, we note the requestor only seeks e-mail addresses. Accordingly, only the submitted e-mail addresses are responsive to the request. This ruling does not address the public availability of any information that is not responsive to the request and the board is not required to release such information in response to this request.

¹ You state the board sought and received clarification of the information requested. See Gov't Code § 552.222 (providing if request for information is unclear, governmental body may ask requestor to clarify request); see also *City of Dallas v. Abbott*, 304 S.W.3d 380, 387 (Tex. 2010) (holding that when a governmental entity, acting in good faith, requests clarification or narrowing of an unclear or overbroad request for information, the ten-day period to request an attorney general ruling is measured from the date the request is clarified or narrowed).

² 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 those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

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 that other statutes make confidential. Section 156.006 of the Occupations Code provides, in relevant part, as follows:

(a) Each license holder shall submit to the board telephone numbers, fax numbers, and e-mail addresses, if available and as appropriate, that the board may use to contact the license holder in an emergency.

...

(d) The information provided by a license holder under this section is confidential and is not subject to disclosure under [the Act]. The board may not publish, release, or make available information provided by a license holder under this section except as provided by Subsection (e).

Occ. Code § 156.006(a), (d). You state the submitted e-mail addresses belong to licensed physicians and were provided to the board pursuant to section 156.006(a). Upon review, we find the board must withhold the responsive information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 156.006(d) of the Occupations Code.³

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,

Alexandra C. Burks
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

ACB/jm

Ref: ID# 848959

c: Requestor

³ As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure of the responsive information.