



# COMMISSIONERS COURT COMMUNICATION

REFERENCE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

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DATE: 04/04/2023

**SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF AGREEMENT FOR ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORD SYSTEM BETWEEN TARRANT COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT, D/B/A JPS HEALTH NETWORK AND TARRANT COUNTY, ON BEHALF OF TARRANT COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE – MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE**

**\*\*\* CONSENT AGENDA \*\*\***

**COMMISSIONERS COURT ACTION REQUESTED**

It is requested that Commissioners Court approve the agreement for Access to Electronic Medical Record System between Tarrant County Hospital District, d/b/a JPS Health Network and Tarrant County, on behalf of Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office (TCME).

**BACKGROUND**

The TCME conducts inquests into the cause and manner of death of persons that may have been treated by physicians within the JPS Health Network system. The Medical Examiner's Office routinely requests and obtains medical records from JPS so a decedent's medical history can be reviewed to determine if it may contribute to the cause of death. HIPAA law 45CFR164.512 permits facilities to release protected health information to the TCME for the purpose of identifying a deceased person and determining the cause of death.

The TCME and JPS Health Network have exchanged records requests and medical records back and forth via paper fax for years. This process is time consuming for both parties and incurs costs associated with staffing hours, supplies, fax machines, and fax lines.

The TCME and JPS Health Network submit the aforementioned agreement for consideration that would allow the TCME to access JPS Health Network medical records online. Access would be through the JPS Health Network online portal used by physicians in the county to view hospital and clinic records of their patients. This agreement outlines specific requirement for system access; use and disclosure of protected health information; safeguards; data ownership; audits; and laws. This request will modernize the previous manual fax process that has been in place for decades and eliminate some of the current costs associated with medical records requests.

The Criminal District Attorney's Office has approved this agreement as to form.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item. Cost savings may be realized by both agencies once initiated.

SUBMITTED BY:	Administrator's Office	PREPARED BY: APPROVED BY:	John Briggs Kendall V. Crowns, MD
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