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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

DANIEL GONZALEZ,
Plaintiff,
v.
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
Defendant.

Case No. 1:24-cv-00435-JLT-SAB
ORDER RE STIPULATED PROTECTIVE
ORDER REGARDING CONFIDENTIAL
INFORMATION
(ECF No. 15)

The parties, through counsel, hereby stipulate to the terms of this protective order to govern the parties' disclosure, use, and handling of confidential information in this action. A Protective Order is needed because discovery in this action will likely involve the production of confidential, personal and private information pertaining to plaintiffs and witnesses including, but not limited to, personally identifiable information, health information, employment information and other information protected by the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. § 552a. The parties therefore agree that good cause exists for such information to be protected from unnecessary disclosure.

IT IS HEREBY STIPULATED as follows:

A. Definitions

1. "Action" shall mean the case captioned *Daniel Gonzalez v. United States of America*, Civil Action No. 1:24-cv-435 JLT SAB.

1 2. “Confidential Information” shall mean information that, at the time of its production in
2 discovery in the Action, or thereafter, is designated confidential by the Producing Party because of a
3 good faith belief that the information is:

- 4 a. personal financial, medical or other private information relating to an individual that
5 would properly be redacted from any public court filing pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil
6 Procedure 5.2., including any document, information, or tangible thing protected by the
7 provisions of the Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, 34
8 C.F.R. Part 99; certain individually identifiable health information (defined as health
9 information that is connected to a patient’s name, address, Social Security number, or
10 other identifying number, including Health Insurance Claim (HIC) number) that may be
11 subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552a; the provisions of 45 C.F.R.
12 §§ 164.102-164.534 (regulations promulgated pursuant to the Health Insurance
13 Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)); or health information for which there may
14 be no waiver by the patient to produce the records to an entity outside one of the Parties;
- 15 b. information protected by the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C § 552a;
- 16 c. information contained in individual personnel or employment file (e.g., “A Files”) that
17 would be protected by the Privacy Act or any other information or documents that would
18 be covered by the Privacy Act;
- 19 d. any other information that is protected or restricted from disclosure by Court order,
20 statutes, or regulations.

21 3. “Disclose” (or forms thereof) shall mean to distribute, provide, or otherwise make available
22 for access, viewing, or copying. “Disclose” shall include the actual covered document or item as well as
23 the contents or information contained therein, such that disclosing a copy, summary, paraphrasing, or
24 characterization would be considered a disclosure of the document itself for purposes of this Protective
25 Order.

26 4. “Document” shall mean all items listed in Fed. R. Civ. P. 34(a)(1)(A) & (B).

27 5. “Challenging Party” shall mean any party who challenges the designation of information as
28 Confidential Information under this Protective Order.

1 6. “Designating Party” shall mean the party or other person producing in discovery in the Action
2 any information that the Producing Party seeks to designate and to have treated as Confidential
3 Information pursuant to this Protective Order.

4 7. “Producing Party” shall mean the person or party producing in discovery in the Action.

5 8. “Receiving Party” shall mean any party who receives information that has been designated as
6 Confidential Information.

7 **B. Purpose, Scope, and Limitations of Protective Order**

8 1. This Protective Order applies to discovery, pre-trial, trial, and post-trial proceedings in this
9 action, whether the Documents are produced by a party or a person or entity who is not a party to this
10 action (a “non-party”). This Order binds the parties and their respective agents, successors, personal
11 representatives, and assignees.

12 2. This Protective Order shall not prejudice in any way any party’s ability to challenge the use or
13 disclosure of information other than information designated as Confidential Information under this
14 Protective Order in this Action. A party’s compliance with the terms of this Protective Order shall not
15 operate as an admission that any particular material is or is not (a) confidential, (b) privileged, or (c)
16 admissible in evidence at trial.

17 3. The protections conferred by this Protective Order do not cover any information that (i) is
18 properly in the public domain; (ii) becomes part of the public domain after its disclosure to a Receiving
19 Party as a result of publication not involving a violation of this Protective Order, including becoming
20 part of the public record in this Action through trial or otherwise; (iii) is known to or is in the possession
21 of the Receiving Party prior to the disclosure in this Action or obtained by the Receiving Party after the
22 disclosure in this Action from a source who obtained the information lawfully and under no obligation
23 of confidentiality to the Producing Party.

24 4. If the Confidential Information contains highly sensitive information, then the Parties may
25 stipulate or the Producing Party may move for the establishment of an additional category of protection
26 (*e.g.*, Attorneys’ Eyes Only) that prohibits disclosure of such information in that category, or that limits
27 disclosure only to specifically designated counsel, Party representative(s) whose assistance is reasonably
28

1 necessary to the conduct of these cases, and who agree to be bound by the terms of the Order provided
2 herein or as revised with respect to such information.

3 5. Patient identifiable information can be designated “confidential” under this Protective Order.

4 6. This Protective Order does not govern the use by the parties of Confidential Information in
5 open court at any hearing or trial, but the parties reserve the right to seek relief from the Court in
6 connection with the intended use of Confidential Information in any such hearing or trial.

7 7. This Protective Order governs the disclosure, use, and handling of all Confidential
8 Information, regardless of the format or medium in which such Confidential Information is generated,
9 stored, or maintained.

10 8. Any Confidential Information referenced in any pleading or contained in any Document filed
11 with the Court in this Action by the Producing Party shall at the time of filing cease to be Confidential
12 Information unless the Producing Party files the un-redacted pleading or Document under seal per the
13 procedural requirements of L.R. 141.

14 9. Nothing in this Protective Order shall restrict the right of any Producing Party to use its own
15 Confidential Information for any purpose whatsoever, but if any such use results in a disclosure that
16 causes the Confidential Information to lose its designation as Confidential Information, then it shall no
17 longer be subject to any protection under this Protective Order.

18 10. This Protective Order applies to only disclosures, uses, and handling of Confidential
19 Information occurring after the entry of this Protective Order.

20 11. Neither the termination of this Action nor the termination of employment of any person who
21 has had access to any Confidential Information shall relieve such person of his or her obligations under
22 this Protective Order, which shall survive.

23 12. Any party may at any time seek modification of this Order by agreement or, failing
24 agreement, by motion to the Court.

25 **C. Method for Designating Confidential Information**

26 1. Designations of Confidential Information shall be made by the Producing Party, prior to or at
27 the time of production, except as otherwise provided by this Protective Order.

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1 2. The designation of Confidential Information should be limited to only those Documents or
2 portions of Documents that qualify under the appropriate standards or under the definition of
3 Confidential Information in Section A(2) of this Protective Order.

4 3. Documents produced in discovery in this Action containing confidential information shall be
5 designated as containing “Confidential.” For Documents produced in paper or an electronic form that
6 allows endorsements or similar designation on the image, the designation shall appear by the inclusion
7 of the marking of CONFIDENTIAL. For electronic information that is provided in native form or a
8 format that is not amenable to visible endorsement on the image, the file name(s) shall begin with
9 CONFIDENTIAL. The media on which the Confidential Information is provided (e.g., CD, DVD,
10 external hard drive) also must be and remain plainly labeled with CONFIDENTIAL unless and until the
11 protection of the data within the media is removed. Any copying or transferring of electronic files that
12 are designated as Confidential Information must be done in a manner that maintains the protection for all
13 copies, including, but not limited to, maintaining the protection in the filename(s) and the location where
14 the copies are stored and the location where the users access the information. Only those Documents or
15 portions of Documents designated as Confidential Information shall be subject to this Protective Order.

16 4. A Receiving Party may request the Designating Party to identify whether a Document labeled
17 “CONFIDENTIAL” is confidential in total or only in part. Within five (5) business days of the request,
18 the Receiving Party and the Designating Party shall confer in good faith to resolve any Receiving
19 Party’s request for such identification. The parties shall memorialize in writing any identification of
20 Confidential Information that results from the meet and confer. If the parties cannot resolve the request
21 to the Receiving Party’s satisfaction during their conference, the Receiving Party may challenge the
22 designation in accordance with Section D of this Order.

23 5. For interrogatory answers and responses to requests for admissions, designation of
24 Confidential Information shall be made by placing within each interrogatory answer or response to
25 requests for admission asserted to contain Confidential Information the following: CONFIDENTIAL.
26 Only those interrogatory answers or responses or portions of interrogatory answers or responses
27 designated as Confidential Information shall be subject to this Protective Order.
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1 6. For depositions, designation of Confidential Information shall be made during the deposition
2 on the record that should include reasons for the assertion, or by letter from counsel within 30 days of
3 receipt of the official deposition transcript or copy thereof (or written notification that the transcript is
4 available), listing the specific pages and lines of the transcript and any exhibits that should be treated as
5 Confidential. The entire deposition transcript (including any exhibits not previously produced in
6 discovery in this Action) shall be treated as Confidential under this Protective Order until the expiration
7 of the above-referenced 30-day period for designation, except that the deponent (and his or her counsel,
8 if any) may review the transcript of his or her own deposition during the 30-day period subject to this
9 Protective Order and the requirement of executing the certification attached as Exhibit A. After
10 designation of Confidential Information is made, the following shall be placed on the front of the
11 original and each copy of a deposition transcript containing Confidential Information:

12 CONFIDENTIAL. If the deposition was filmed, both the recording storage medium (i.e., CD or DVD)
13 and its container shall be labeled CONFIDENTIAL. The deposition transcript shall also be accompanied
14 by a cover letter from the Designating Party identifying the specific pages and lines of the transcript and
15 any exhibits (or portions of exhibits) designated as Confidential Information. Only those pages and lines
16 and exhibits (or portions of exhibits) designated as Confidential Information, and their corresponding
17 portions of video, if any, shall be subject to this Protective Order.

18 7. For any other Document or item produced in discovery in this Action not falling within
19 Sections C(3), C(5) or C(6) above, designation of Confidential Information shall be made by labeling
20 the item or the item's container with CONFIDENTIAL. If only a portion or portions of the information
21 contained in the item warrant protection as Confidential Information, it shall be accompanied by a cover
22 letter identifying the specific portion or portions so designated. Only the item or portions of the item
23 designated as Confidential Information shall be subject to this Protective Order.

24 8. If it comes to a Producing Party's attention that information designated as Confidential
25 Information does not qualify or no longer qualifies for protection, the Producing Party must promptly
26 notify all Parties that it is withdrawing the designation for the applicable information.
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1 **D. Challenging Confidential Information Designations**

2 1. Prior to thirty (30) days before the final pre-trial conference, any party may object to a
3 designation of materials as Confidential Information. The party objecting to confidentiality must notify,
4 in writing, Counsel for the producing party of the objected-to materials and the grounds for the
5 objection. If the dispute is not resolved consensually between the parties within fourteen (14) days of
6 receipt of such a notice of objections, the Challenging Party may move the Court for a ruling on the
7 objection. In the event any party files a motion challenging the designation or redaction of information,
8 the document shall be submitted to the Court, under seal, for an in-camera inspection. The materials at
9 issue must be treated as Confidential Information, as designated by the producing party, until the Court
10 has ruled on the objection or the matter has been otherwise resolved.

11 **E. Disclosure, Use, and Handling of Confidential Information**

12 1. Counsel of record are responsible for employing reasonable measures, consistent with this
13 Protective Order, to control access to and to secure distribution of Confidential Information.

14 2. Confidential Information shall be disclosed, summarized, described, characterized, or
15 otherwise communicated or made available, in whole or in part, to only the following persons and only
16 as reasonably necessary for this Action:

- 17 a. Counsel (including outside counsel) for the parties, including associated personnel
18 necessary to assist counsel in this Action, such as litigation assistants, paralegals,
19 interpreters, and litigation support, information technology, information or records
20 management, investigative, secretarial, or clerical personnel;
- 21 b. Any person with prior authorized access to the Confidential Information;
- 22 c. Witnesses, potential witnesses, and deponents, including their counsel;
- 23 d. Court reporters and other persons not employed by this Court, retained to record or to
24 transcribe testimony or argument at interviews or depositions in connection with this
25 Action;
- 26 e. Photocopying, data processing, and other support services that are reasonably necessary
27 to litigation in this Action;
- 28 f. Retained expert witnesses and consultants;

- 1 g. Mediators or arbitrators;
- 2 h. Any person indicated on the face of the document to be its author or co-author, or any
- 3 person identified on the face of the document as one to whom a copy of such document
- 4 was sent before its production in this Action;
- 5 i. Other persons only upon consent of the Producing Party and on such conditions as the
- 6 Parties may agree; and
- 7 j. This Court (including any judicial officer to whom this Court may refer this matter for
- 8 settlement purposes) and Court personnel, including persons recording or transcribing
- 9 testimony or argument at a conference, hearing, trial, or appeal in this Action.

10 3. Disclosure to the persons referenced in subsections (E)(2)(c), (f), and (i) above may only occur
11 after the person to whom the disclosure is being made has been given a copy of this Protective Order
12 and has signed a declaration in the form attached hereto as "Exhibit A."

13 4. Persons receiving Confidential Information pursuant to the terms of this Protective Order are
14 prohibited from disclosing it to any person except in conformance with this Protective Order.

15 5. Before any materials produced in discovery, answers to interrogatories, responses to requests
16 for admissions, deposition transcripts, or other documents which are designated as Confidential
17 Information are filed with the Court for any purpose, the parties must follow the procedural
18 requirements of L.R. 141. Nothing in this Order shall be construed as automatically permitting a party to
19 file under seal. Further, no portion of the trial of the matter shall be conducted under seal, unless the
20 parties and the Court so agree.

21 6. If the need arises for any Party to disclose Confidential Information in a proceeding in open
22 Court or at any hearing or trial, it may do so only after giving seven (7) business days' notice to the
23 Producing Party who, after a good faith effort to meet-and-confer, may seek additional relief from the
24 Court. If a hearing is scheduled to occur less than seven (7) business days from the date the hearing is
25 scheduled, the notice contemplated by this Section E(6) shall be accomplished within twenty-four (24)
26 hours, or as soon as practicable. The notice contemplated by Section E(6) for purposes of a Party who
27 asserts the need to disclose Confidential Information at trial may be accomplished by provision of a pre-
28 trial exhibit list and resolution of any objection by the Court at a Pretrial Conference.

1 7. If any Party is (a) subpoenaed in another action, (b) served with a demand in another action to
2 which it is a Party, (c) served with any legal process by one not a party to this action, or (d) otherwise
3 compelled to respond to a request pursuant to existing independent statutory, law enforcement, national
4 security or regulatory obligations imposed on a party, and such subpoena, demand, legal process, or
5 request seeks information or material which was designated as Confidential Information by someone
6 other than that Party, the Party shall give written notice within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of such
7 subpoena, demand, legal process, or request to the Designating Party, and prior to compliance with the
8 subpoena, so as to allow the Designating Party to seek protection from the relevant court(s). Nothing in
9 this Protective Order shall be construed as requiring the Party or anyone else covered by this Protective
10 Order to challenge or appeal any order requiring production of information or material covered by this
11 Protective Order, or to subject itself to any penalties for noncompliance with any legal process or order,
12 or to seek any relief from this Court.

13 8. Except as set forth in Section 7, a Receiving Party may use Confidential Information only in
14 connection with prosecuting, defending, or attempting to settle this Action. The Confidential
15 Information shall not be used by the Receiving Party for any purpose outside of this Action.

16 9. No one subject to this Protective Order shall use Confidential Information obtained in this
17 Action to retaliate against, intimidate, discriminate against, or harass any individual in any manner.

18 **F. Inadvertent Production of Confidential Information**

19 1. Nothing herein shall be deemed or construed as a waiver of any applicable privilege, right of
20 privacy, or proprietary interest with respect to any information or item. The parties agree to follow Fed.
21 R. Civ. P. 26(b)(5)(B) with respect to any inadvertently or unintentionally produced or disclosed
22 Confidential Information.

23 2. If a Receiving Party learns that, by inadvertence or otherwise, it, or a person to whom it has
24 disclosed Confidential Information in accordance with this Protective Order, has disclosed Confidential
25 Information to any person or in any circumstance not authorized under this Protective Order, the
26 Receiving Party shall, upon learning of the unauthorized disclosure: (a) promptly notify the person(s) to
27 whom the unauthorized disclosure was made that the unauthorized disclosure contains Confidential
28 Information subject to this Protective Order; (b) promptly make all reasonable efforts to obtain the

1 return of the Confidential Information and to prevent further unauthorized disclosures of the
2 Confidential Information, including requesting the person who received the unauthorized disclosure to
3 agree to be bound by the terms of this Protective Order by executing a declaration in the form attached
4 as Exhibit A; and (c) within five calendar days notify the Producing Party and all other parties of the
5 identity of the person(s) to whom the unauthorized disclosure was made, the circumstances surrounding
6 the disclosure, and the steps taken to prevent any use or further disclosure of the Confidential
7 Information that was the subject of the unauthorized disclosure.

8 **G. Disposition of Documents Containing Confidential Information**

9 1. Except as provided in this Protective Order, within 90 days of the final termination of this
10 Action, whether by settlement, judgment, or other disposition or conclusion and all appeals or
11 opportunities to appeal therefrom, a Receiving Party shall take reasonable steps either (a) to destroy or
12 to delete all items designated as Confidential Information or (b) to return them to the Designating Party,
13 depending upon the Designating Party's stated reasonable preference, except materials that exist on
14 back-up tapes or similar systems. Materials that exist on back-up tapes, systems, or similar storage need
15 not be immediately deleted or destroyed, and, instead, such materials may be overwritten and destroyed
16 in the normal course of business. Until they are overwritten in the normal course of business, the
17 Receiving Party will take reasonable steps to limit access, if any, to the persons necessary to conduct
18 routine IT and cybersecurity functions. In the course of disposing of information in its possession under
19 this paragraph, Receiving Party also will take reasonable steps to notify persons to whom it distributed
20 Confidential Information pursuant to this Order that such information should be returned to Receiving
21 Party or destroyed by the person possessing the information with written confirmation to Receiving
22 Party.

- 23 a. For material that contains or reflects Confidential Information, but that constitutes or
24 reflects counsel's work product, or that of retained consultants and experts, counsel of
25 record for the parties shall be entitled to retain such work product in their files in
26 accordance with the provisions of this Protective Order, so long as it is and remains
27 clearly marked to reflect that it contains Confidential Information subject to this
28 Protective Order.

- 1 b. Counsel of record for the parties shall also be entitled to retain an archival copy of all
2 pleadings; affidavits; motion papers; trial, deposition, and hearing transcripts; legal
3 memoranda; correspondence; deposition and trial exhibits; expert reports; briefs; other
4 papers filed with the Court; and any other parts of the trial record, even if such material
5 contains Confidential Information, so long as such material is and remains clearly marked
6 to reflect that it contains Confidential Information. Even after the final disposition of this
7 Action, the terms of this Protective Order shall continue to govern the disclosure, use,
8 and handling of any Confidential Information unless and until its Designating Party
9 agrees otherwise in writing or a court order directs.
- 10 c. In particular, attorneys for the United States may maintain copies of any documents
11 designated Confidential in their case file for this case, and may maintain copies of any
12 notes or summaries containing such Confidential Information in their case file for this
13 case, subject to 44 U.S.C. § 3101, et seq., and 5 U.S.C. § 552, et seq.

14 **H. Privacy Act.**

15 1. The United States is authorized to produce personal identifying information contained within
16 electronically stored information or hard copy documents. Any electronically stored information or hard
17 copy documents containing such personal identifying information will be deemed Confidential
18 Information, regardless of whether the electronically stored information or hard copy documents are
19 marked with a “CONFIDENTIAL” legend designating the information as Confidential Information.

20 2. This is an order of a court of competent jurisdiction. 5 U.S.C. § 552a(b)(11).

21 **I. Applicability to Parties Later Joined.**

22 1. If additional persons or entities become parties to this Action, they must not be given access to
23 any Confidential Information until they execute and file with the Court their written agreement to be
24 bound by the provisions of this Order.

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1 **EXHIBIT A**

2 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
3 EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

4 DANIEL GONZALEZ,

5 Plaintiff,

6 v.

7 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

8 Defendant.

CASE NO. 1:24-cv-435 SAB

CERTIFICATION

9
10 I hereby declare that I have read and that I understand the Agreed Protective Order entered in the
11 above-captioned case. I further declare that I will comply with all of the terms and conditions of this
12 Protective Order, and that I will not disclose any Confidential Information, as that term is defined in the
13 Protective Order, in a manner that is inconsistent with the Protective Order. I will maintain any
14 Confidential Information in my possession – including copies, notes, or other transcriptions made
15 therefrom – in a secure manner to prevent unauthorized access to it. I understand that any unauthorized
16 disclosure may subject me to a ruling of contempt or other sanction imposed by the District Court. I
17 hereby consent to be subject to the personal jurisdiction of the United States District Court for the
18 Eastern District of California with respect to any proceedings relative to the enforcement of that Order,
19 including any proceeding related to contempt of that Order.

20 Executed this ___ day of _____ by _____
21 (Print Name)

22 Signed _____
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