

The Houston Experience

- Access to Health Care in Texas
- December 14, 2004
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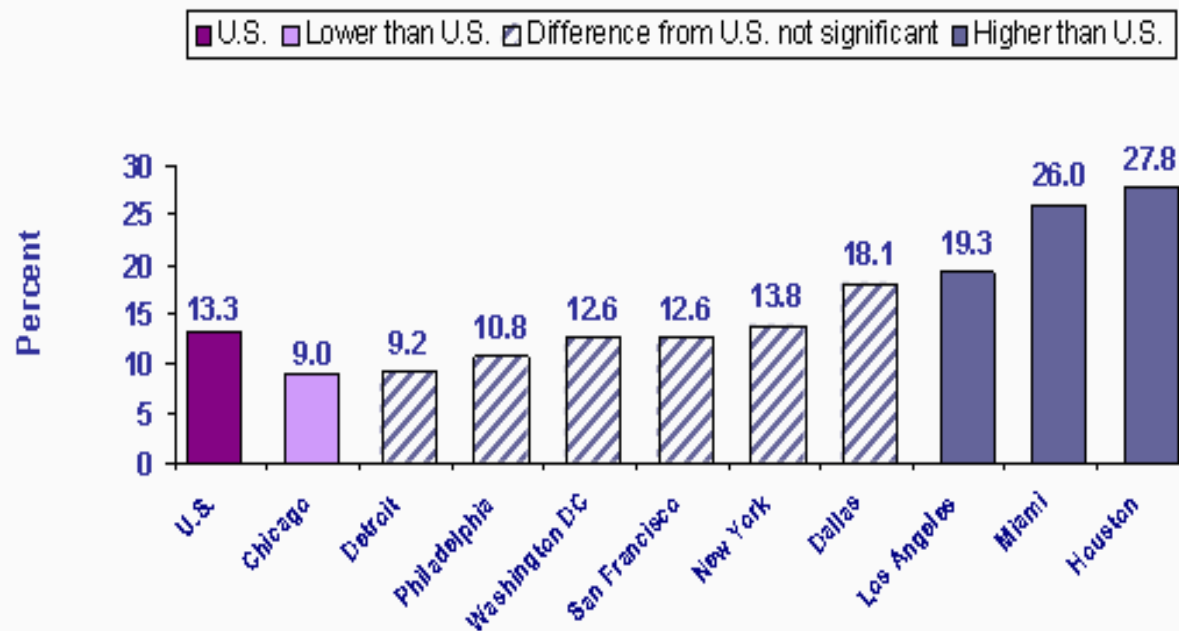


Overview

- The problem
- The consequences
- A new plan

% of Persons Uninsured for the Entire Year by Major U.S. Cities

Figure 4. Percentage of persons under 65 without health insurance the entire year, 2000



Source: Center for Financing, Access and Cost Trends, AHRQ, Medical Expenditure Panel Survey—Household Component, 2000



Houston Uninsured

- 2003, 32% under age 65, 1.1 million
- Hispanics/Latinos - 51%
- Population growth and the ethnic shift will lead to more uninsured
 - 2000 – Population 3.3 million
 - 43% Anglo, 33% Hispanic/Latino, 19% African American, 6% Asian/American Indian/Other
 - 2020 – Population 5.0 million
 - 48% Hispanic/Latino, 28% Anglo, 16% African American, 8% Asian/American Indian/Other

Houston Safety Net Providers

- Harris County Hospital District
- Harris County Public Health & Environmental Services
- Harris County Mental Health & Mental Retardation Authority Clinics
- Harris County Psychiatric Center
- City of Houston Department of Health & Human Services
- Private clinics
- Private Hospitals and Physicians

Excess Demand

- Public and private primary care clinics meet 38% of the demand.
- There are 22 identified Medically Underserved Areas.
- The HCHD is serving 23% of the uninsured.
- 84,000 adults with severe/persistent mental illness in need of public services. MHMRA is serving 9,000 adults.
- 20,000 children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbance in need of public services. MHMRA serves 2,000.

Consequences

1. ER Overcrowding from uninsured reliance on hospital ERs for care
 - 54.5% of ED visits by Harris County residents to safety net hospitals in 2002 were for non-emergent or primary care treatable conditions.
 - Contributing to ER saturation and ER diversion more than 20% of the time.

Non-optimal Visits by Payment Source

**2002 ED Visits at Safety Net Hospitals
Non-optimal Visits by Payment Source**

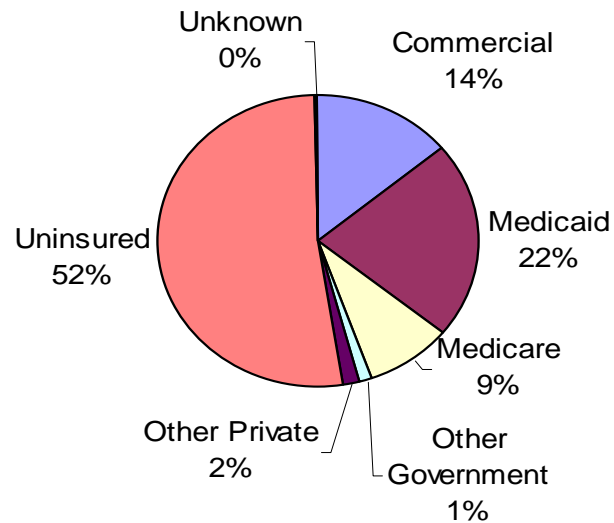
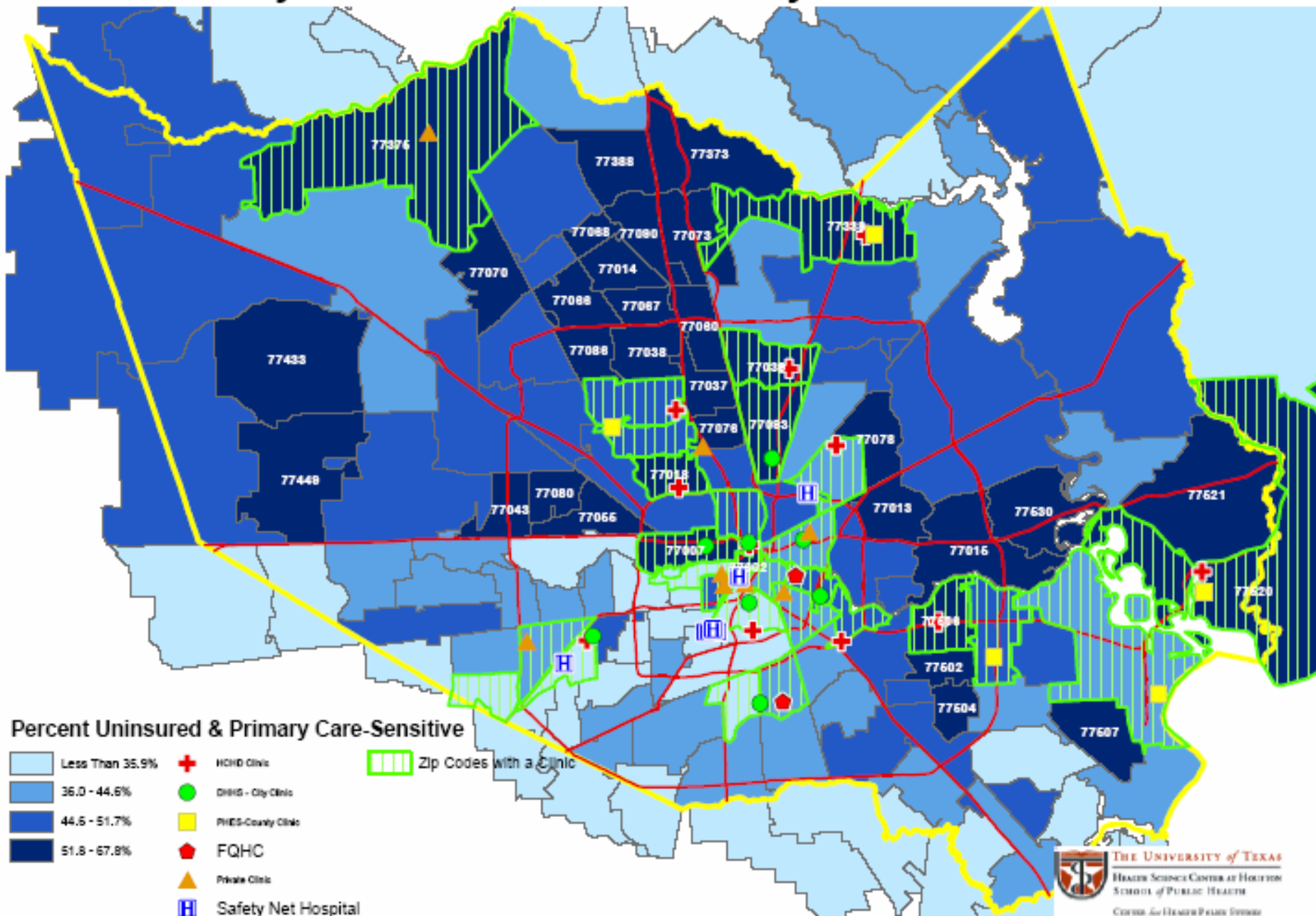
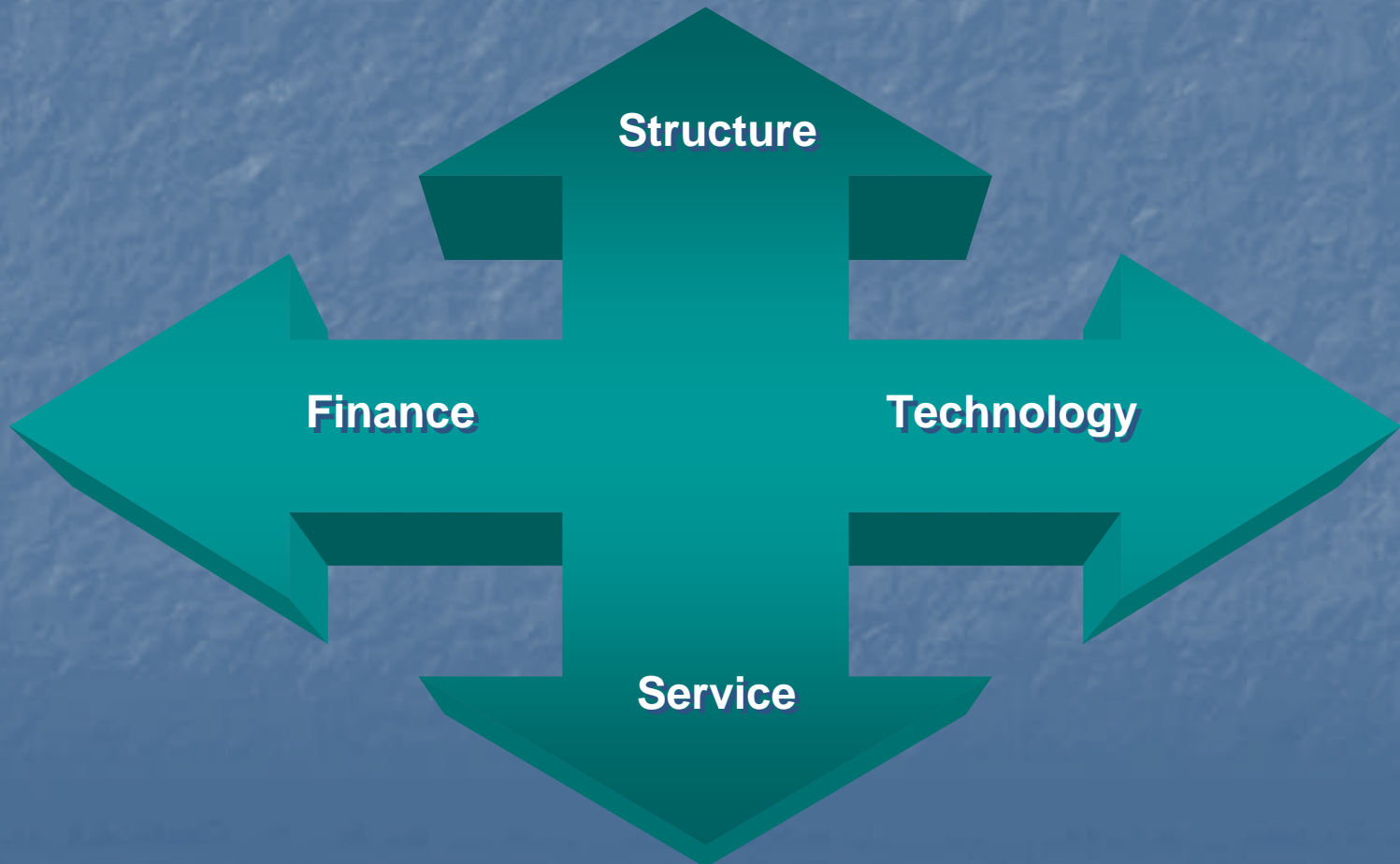


Figure 4. Correlation of Primary Care-Sensitive ED visits by the Uninsured and Primary Care Clinics



Houston Public Health Task Force Plan

- The task force consisted of 19 members. Over 200 people participated through four working groups.



The Plan

- Consolidate public health agencies that deliver safety net care.
 - To increase accountability, coordinate planning, efficient resource allocation
- Develop community health information network.
- Increase capacity of community-based primary care sites.
- Reduce the number of uninsured through local coverage strategies:
 - CHIP premium assistance program
 - H.B. 3122 Medicaid waiver for Medicaid and CHIP parents
 - Public/private insurance plan
- [Public Health Task Force Report](http://www.houston.org). Available at www.houston.org

Combines Two Approaches

- Expand coverage, enhancing ability to pay for care, wherever received.
- Increase direct financial support to providers that disproportionately serve the low-income uninsured.