

Flu Shots at Polling Sites: Partisan Politics or Public Health?



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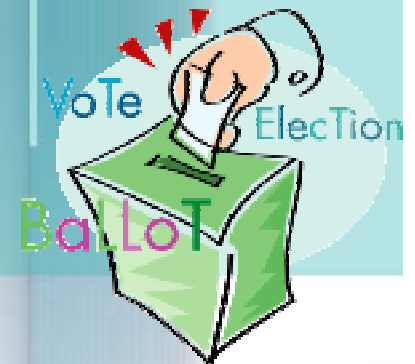
Influenza

- Contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses
 - 5% to 20% of the population
 - 200,000 are hospitalized
 - Nationally 36,000 people die
 - One of the top ten causes of death in Texas
- Groups more likely to develop complications (pneumonia, bronchitis, ear infections)
 - People over 65, People with chronic conditions, Very Young Children



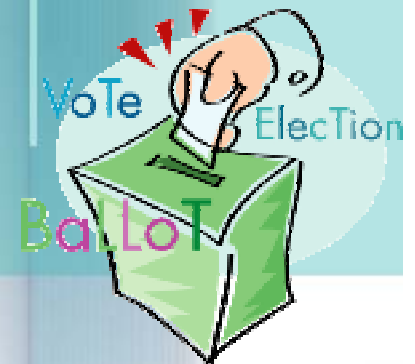
Vote and Vaccinate

- Co-locate influenza immunization clinics at voting locations
 - Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Grant
 - Coordinated national campaign with 25 local health agencies for voting day
 - Public health strategy expanded nationally in 2004
 - Purpose is “to overcome many of the impediments for low-income and hard-to-reach populations”
 - Targeting Adults over 50 (CDC recommendation)



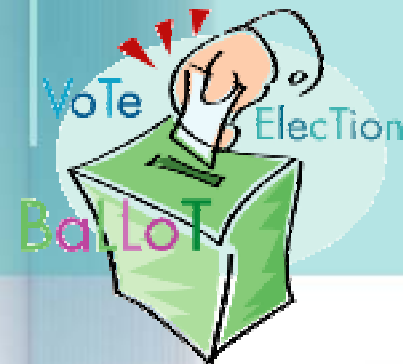
Houston Demographics

- 1.9 million residents
 - 37% Hispanic
 - 31% White
 - 25% African American
 - 5% Asian
 - 1% 2 or more races
- Household Income Below \$20,000
 - 26% of all households
 - 31% of 65 to 74 year olds
 - 41% of those 75 and older



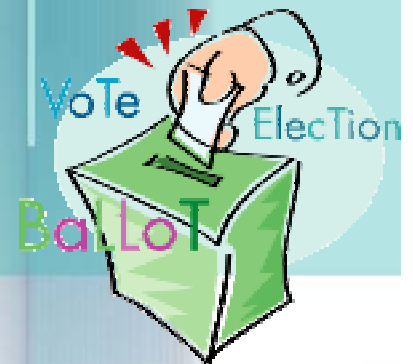
Texas Voting

- Vote on Election Day
 - Vote in Precinct
- Early Voting
 - Vote starting 2 weeks in advance
 - Vote in 33 polling locations in 2006
 - Can vote in any location in home county
 - 42% in 2004 voted early



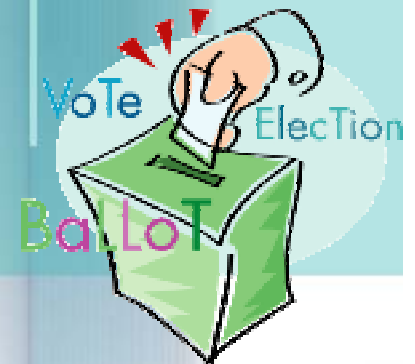
Houston's Program

- Co-located at 4 voting sites
(Planned 5)
- Collaborated with the Amerigroup Foundation for a donation of 2,000 doses of vaccine
- Contacted Harris County Clerk's Office and Received Letter of Support
- Started during early voting period

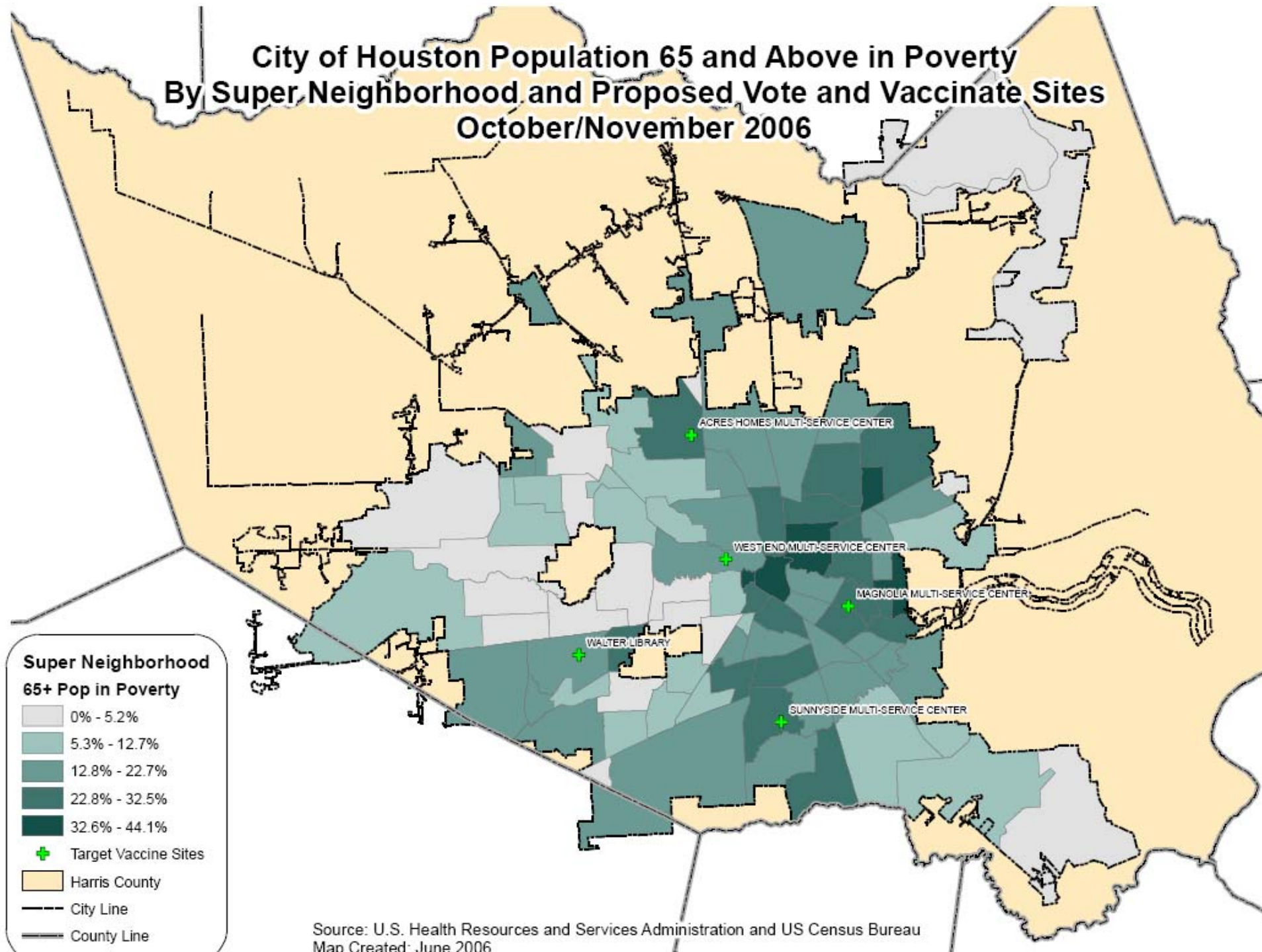


Polling site selection

- Low Income Areas
- Higher than average percentage of older residents, especially over 65 years
- Areas with relatively high voter turn out
- Medically Underserved
 - Health Resource and Service Administration (HRSA) Designation
- City owned locations

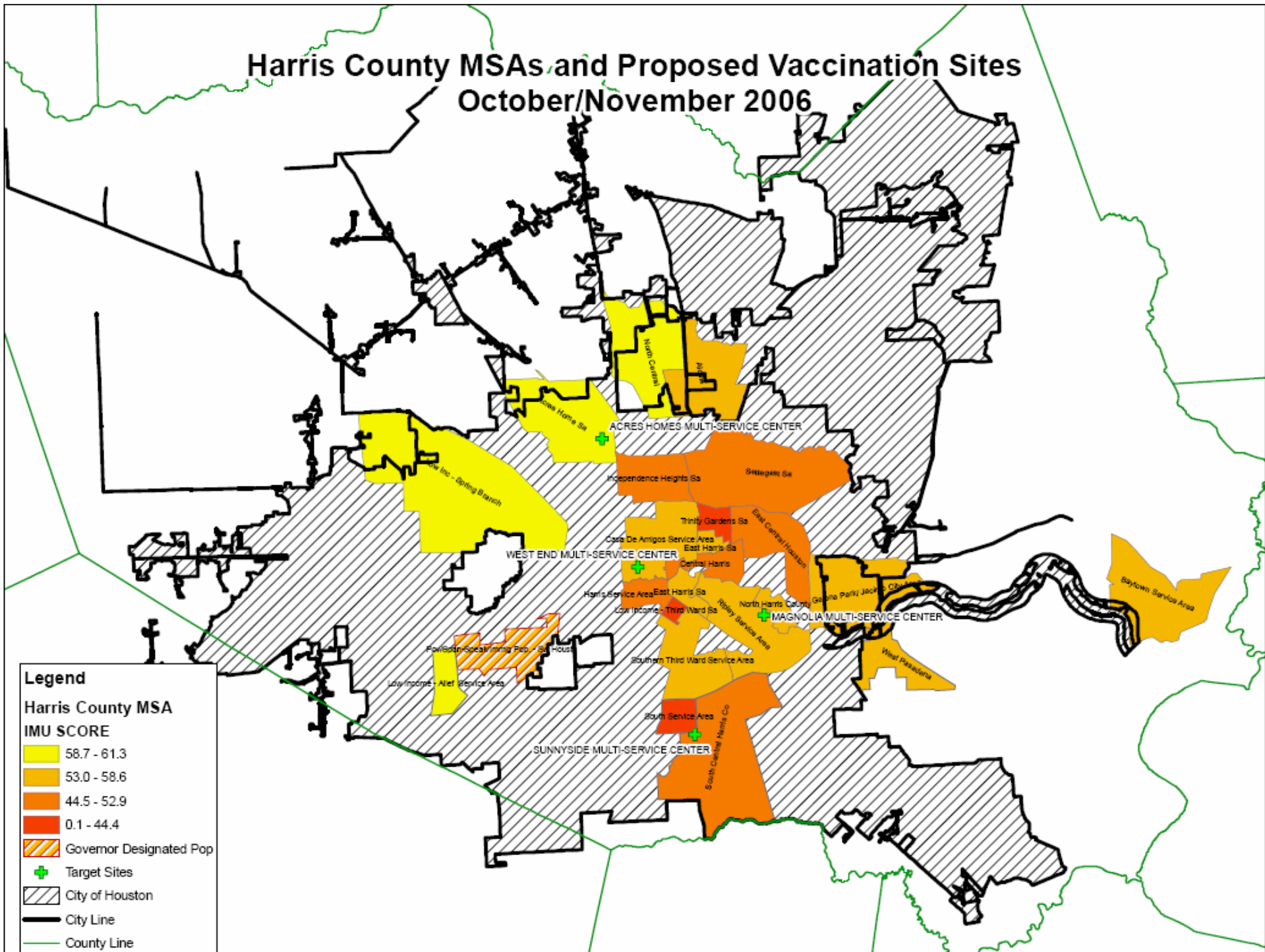


City of Houston Population 65 and Above in Poverty By Super Neighborhood and Proposed Vote and Vaccinate Sites October/November 2006



Source: U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration and US Census Bureau
Map Created: June 2006

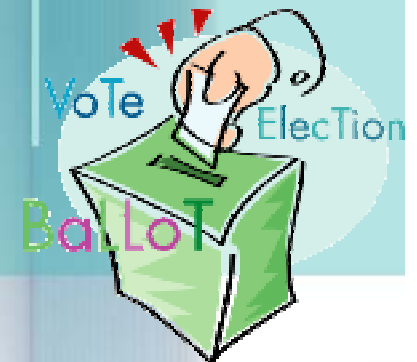
Harris County MSAs and Proposed Vaccination Sites October/November 2006



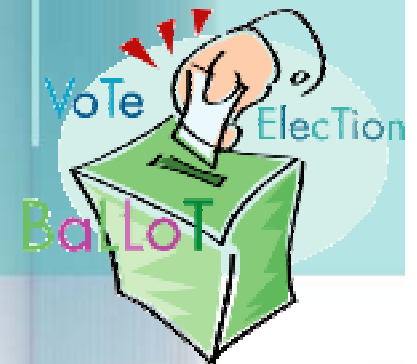
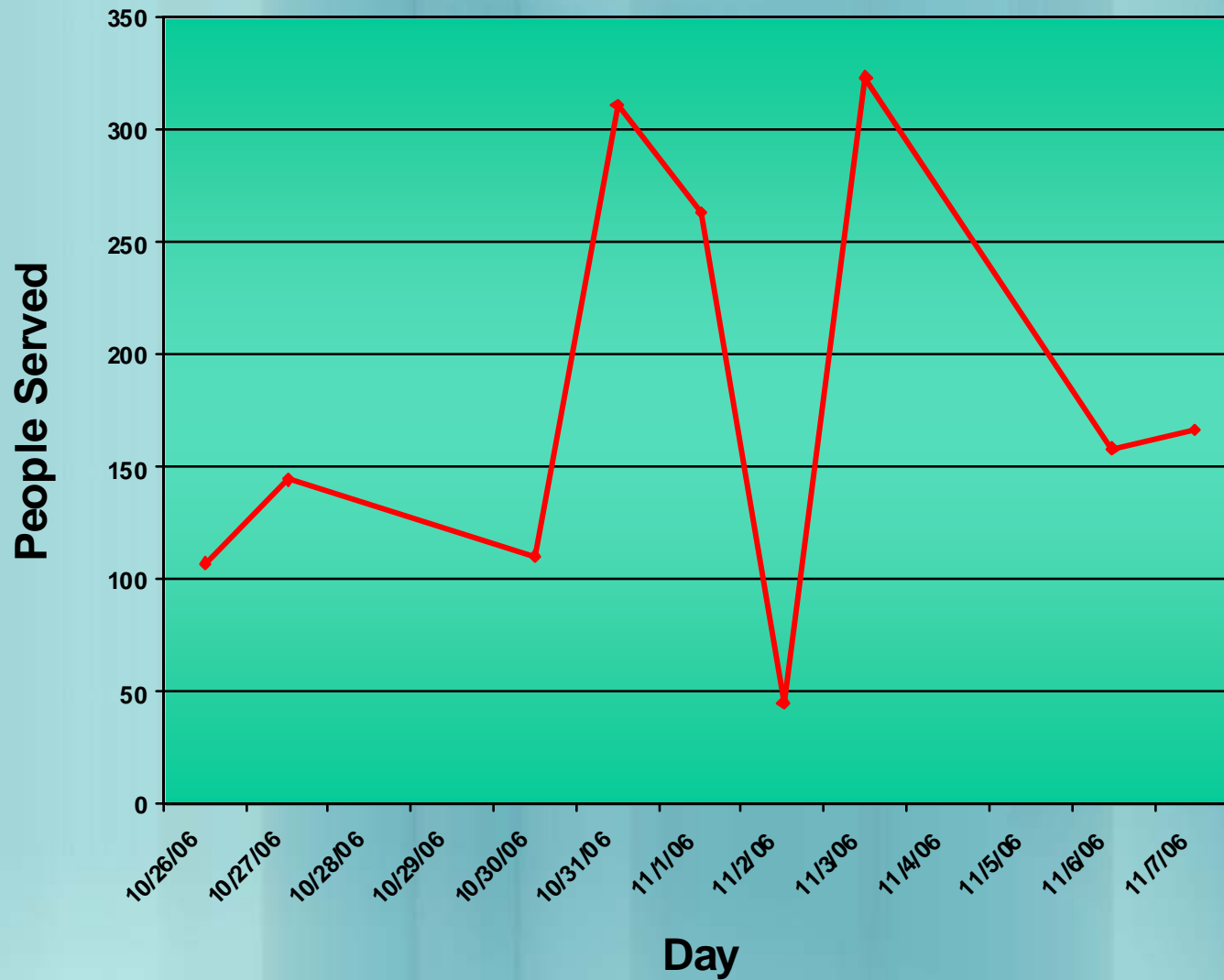
Calendar of Events

October/November 2006

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
23	24	25	26	27
			Start	
30	31	1	2	3
	Press Release	Mayor's Press Conf.		
6	7	8	9	10
	End			

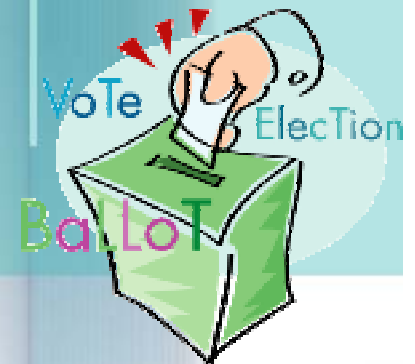


Clinic Use During Program

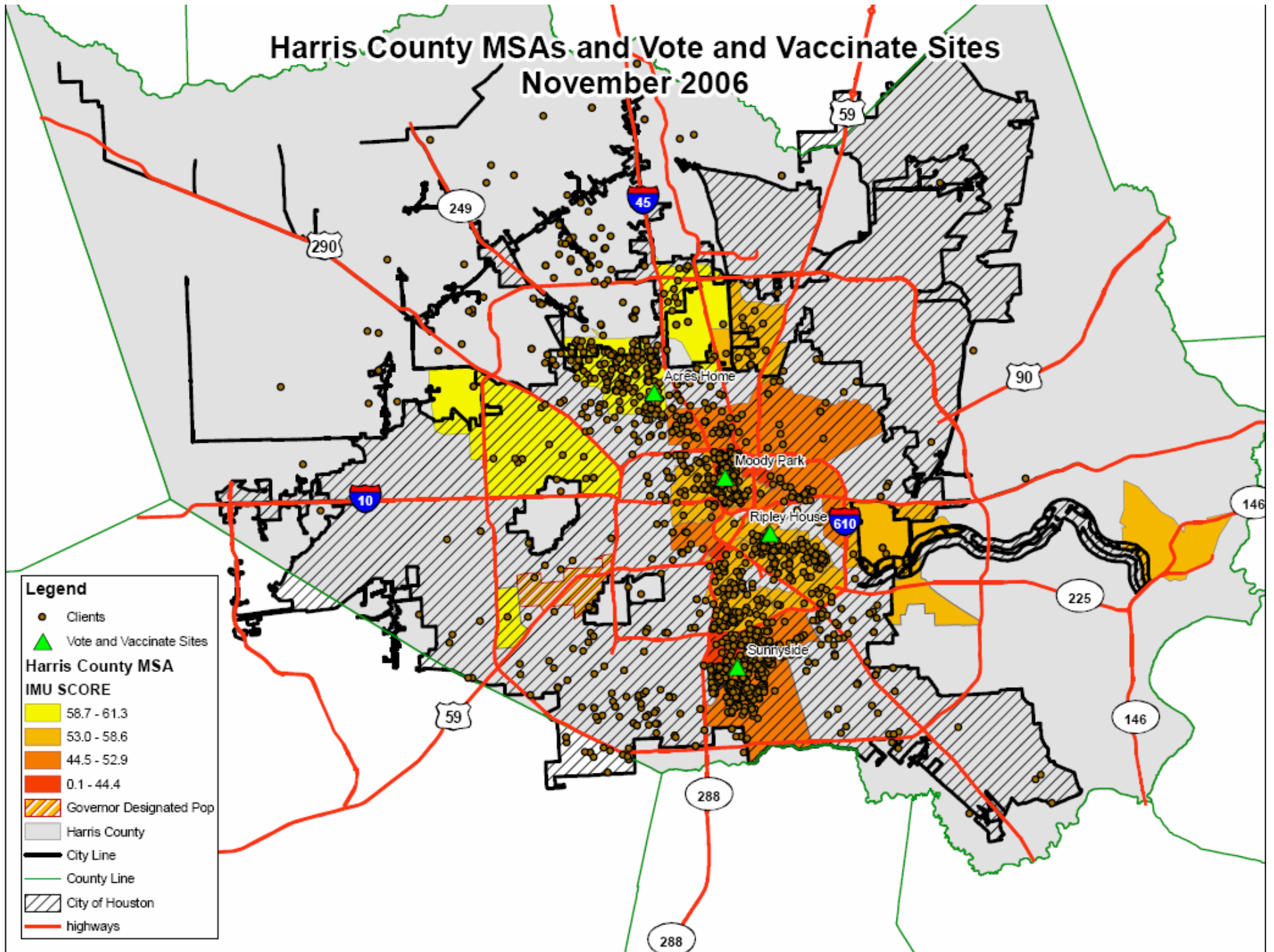


Public Reaction

- Vaccinated 1,627 people
 - 1,161 at co-located sites
 - 466 at clinic-only sites
- 69.4% came from medically underserved areas
 - (n=1,028 out of 1,482)

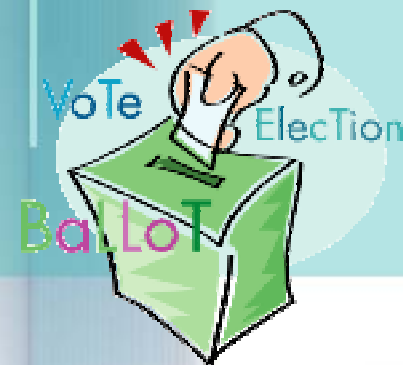


Harris County MSAs and Vote and Vaccinate Sites November 2006



Public Reaction

- Average age was 65.2 years
- Flu Shot History
 - 35.1% reported that they were “not very likely” or “not sure” if they would have received a flu shot elsewhere (n=407 out of 1,161)
 - 39.9% did not receive one the previous year (n=463 out of 1,161)



Media Reaction

HOUSTON★CHRONICLE

Houston mayor cancels free flu shots at polling places



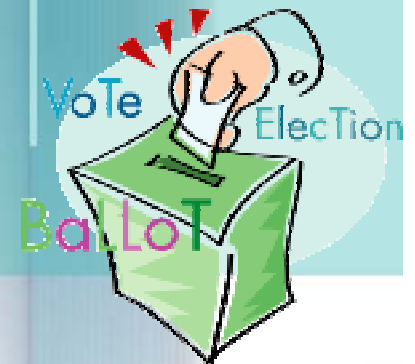
Flu Shots at Houston Polls End After GOP Allege Ploy to Get More Dems to Vote

Los Angeles Times

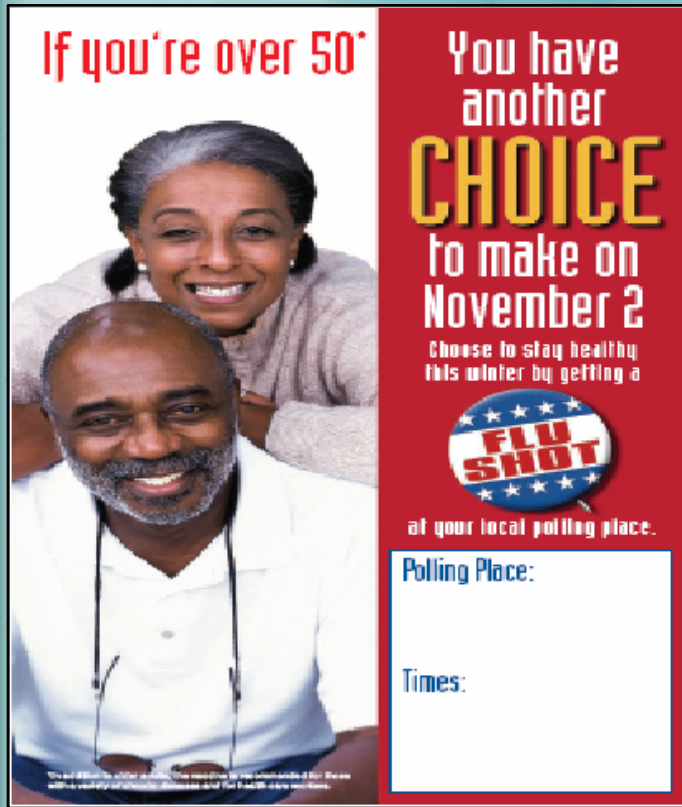
Houston Republicans have bad reaction to flu shots

The New York Times

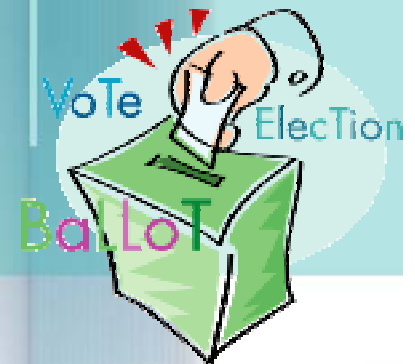
Flu Shot Program Is Ended After G.O.P. Cries Politics



“Flu-Gate”

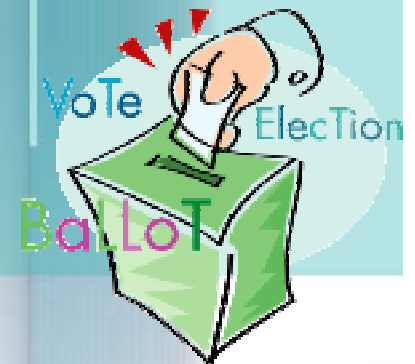


- Republicans perceived program as a “Get out to vote” drive
- They objected to free flu shots at polling locations
- They objected to all clinics located in Democratic Neighborhoods



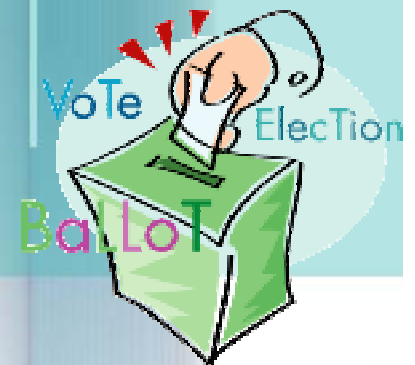
Perceptions

	Health Department	Political Perception
Free Influenza Vaccines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Reduce barriers to care•Reduced security risk•Donated vaccines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Entice people to vote skewing results•Disenfranchising other voters
Voting Locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Socio-economic disadvantage neighborhoods•High volume voting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Targeting minorities who are more likely to vote Democratic



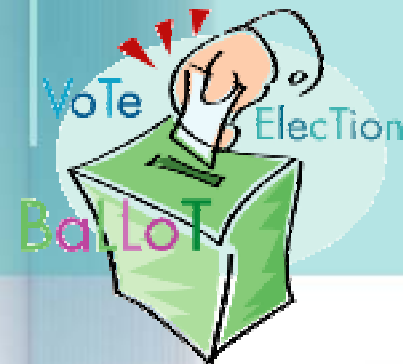
Different Methodologies

	Houston	Galveston
Vaccine Charge	Free	\$20 or Medicare Part B Reimbursement
Program Period	Early Voting	Voting day only
Locations	4 Targeted for access to care	3 Targeted for access to care



Lessons Learned

- Design programs to be diverse as possible
- Identify and consider all stakeholders' interests and/or input
- Remember that government run programs are connected to politics



Discussion

