

Environmental Justice and EPHTN in Houston

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Houston Overview

- 2 million people in city, 4 million in county
- Racially diverse
- City limits encompass 817 square miles
- Large inland port and chemical industry
- City is EPHTN grantee

Houston Has Some Problems

- Petrochemical plants contribute to air quality problems
- No zoning and lack of controls of land use
- Concerns about hazards and health
- Little neighborhood level data
- Multiple jurisdictions impede data collection and interventions
- Health equity is a recent part of Health Department's mission

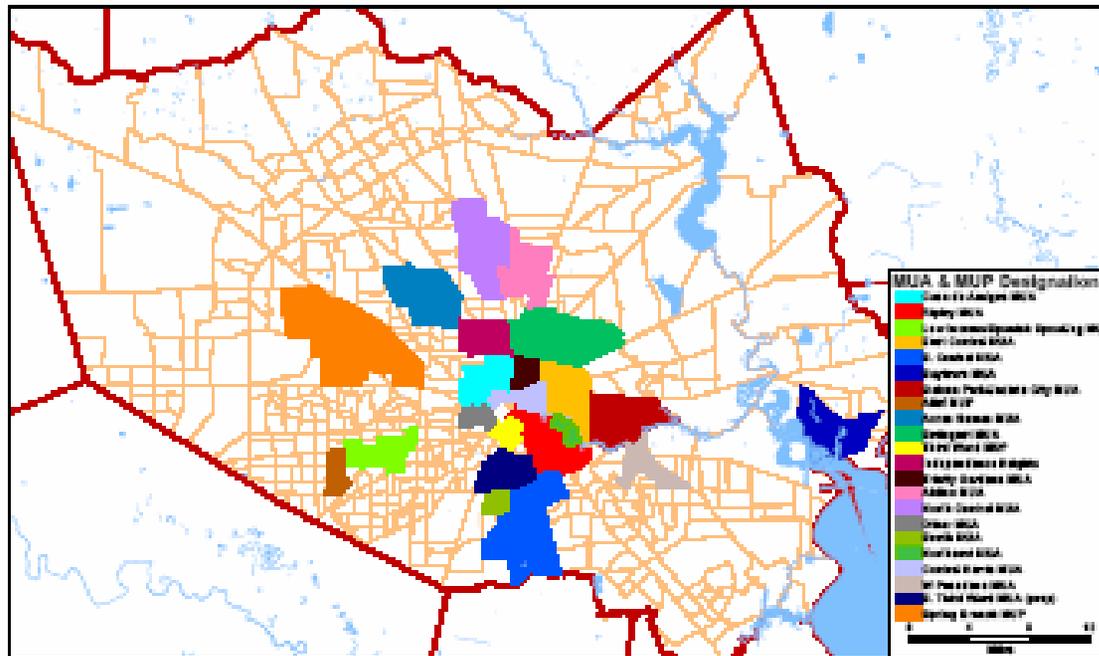
Toxic Release Inventory Sites



Medically Underserved Areas

MUP—Medically Underserved Area

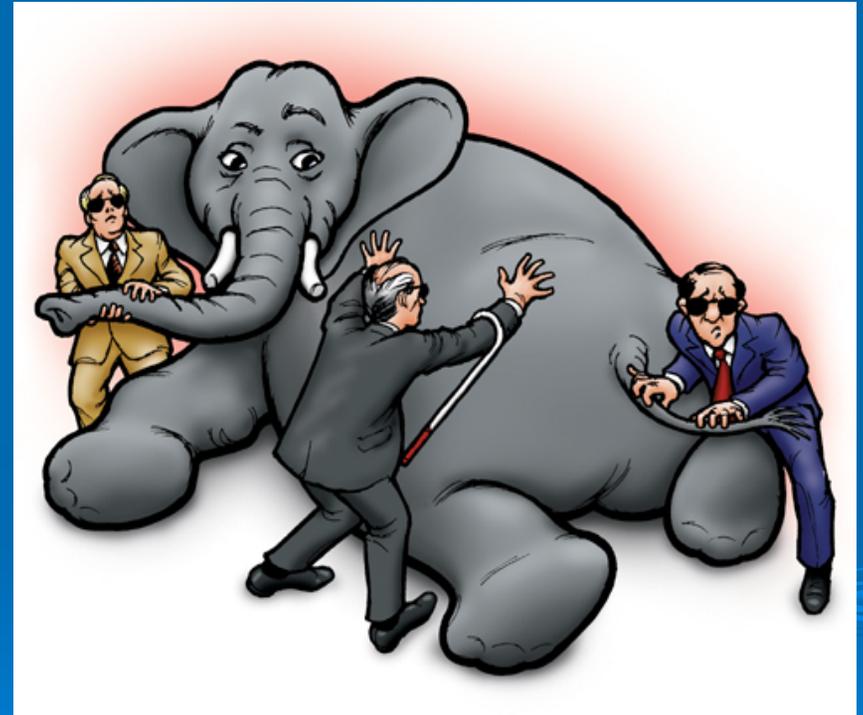
MUP—Medically Underserved Population



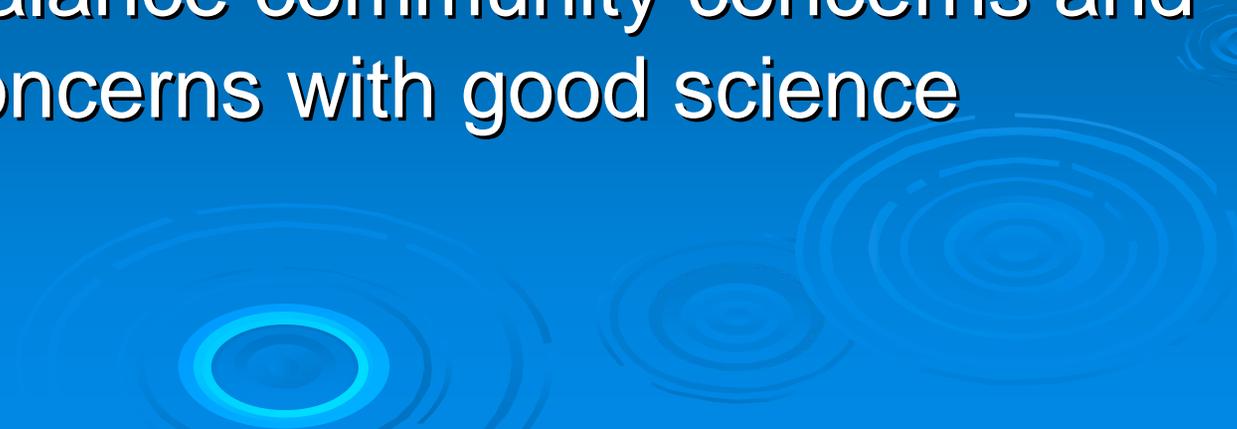
Multiple Perspectives on EPHTN

➤ The many aspects of EPHTN

- Data
 - Hazard and exposure
 - Health effects
- Linkage
- Analysis
- Communication
- Improving health in communities



Public Health's Unique Role

- Inherently political
 - Grounded in science
 - Linked to government
 - Can be caught in the middle between advocates and government
 - Need to balance community concerns and political concerns with good science
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Acres Homes

- Neglected area
 - Concerns about dumps
 - Concerns about cancer rate
 - EPA and State Health Department Reviews were negative
 - Concerns still exist about toxics, disease rates, and injustice
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Milby Park

- Adjacent to petrochemical plants
- High levels of air toxics
- Good monitoring data
- Subject of recent articles in newspaper
- Involvement of local and state agencies
- Lack of neighborhood level data
- Lack of data on other health risks

Challenges

- How do your environmental monitors and regulators and environmental epidemiologist dialogue with the community?
 - What role do environmental health advocates have in advising your health department?
 - How do you incorporate environmental health information as you conduct assessments and community level planning?
 - What best practices do you use in listening to, communicating with, and sharing power with communities?
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