# Healthforce Center at UCSF

# Healthcare Workforce Development for Behavioral Health Consumers



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## Problem Statement

Behavioral Health Consumers (patients) trained as Peer Specialists have limited employment prospects and opportunities for career advancement. Few workforce development programs exist to provide training in healthcare related fields.

# Discovery

I proposed a model to use MHSA Workforce Development funding to support Peer Specialists to obtain training as Medical Assistants and assist with job placement and support.

Conducted 59 Interviews discovering the following:

- 1. Early strong support from Department Leadership including the Director of Workforce Development who became a strong advocate for this project. Targeted funding was identified.
- 2. Peer/Consumer Leadership was enthusiastic and helped to spread the word among Peer Specialists and helped to identify a cohort with interest.
- 3. Merritt College: Dean, Medical Assistant Training Director and the Director, Office for Student Disability Services all took interest in supporting this program and individual students.
- 4. Some skepticism voiced by leadership of Primary Care Programs.
- 5. Family Partners were originally considered for participation. Based on interviews, Family Partners were ultimately not included.
- 6. Significant barriers were identified including economic, criminal convictions and immigration status. These barriers would reduce the pool of potential participants.

# Goals and Objectives

#### Goal:

To provide a supported pathway for Behavioral Health Peer Specialists to obtain training as Medical Assistants and to successfully obtain and maintain employment in various healthcare settings.

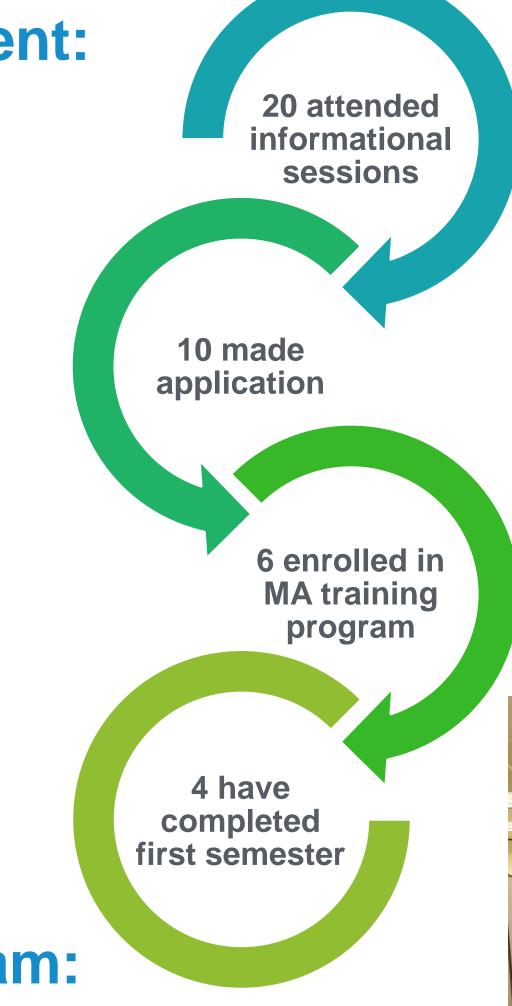
### **Outcome-oriented Objective:**

Five Certified Peer Specialists will be recruited, and enrolled in Medical Assistant training at Merritt College. (12 month supported training program with externship placement). With departmental support, these five will complete training and obtain employment as Medical Assistants with peer Specialist expertise within 18 months.

### Results

#### **Interest and enrollment:**

- Supported Medical
   Assistant (MA) training
   program promoted to
   certified Peer Specialists
   working in Alameda
   County.
- Recruitment was through messaging, social media and scheduled meetings.



# Lessons Learned

#### **Lessons Learned:**

- There is support for workforce development programs training behavioral health consumers in healthcare roles.
- Strong partnerships were essential for implementation.
- Barriers exist for many interested individuals. (e.g. past convictions, immigration status, economics).
- Peer Specialists have so far been successful in a Medical Assistant training programs.
- This project served to enhance trust between a Medical Director and the organized consumer movement.

#### **Next Steps:**

- Current pilot students are 6 months into their training. No student has yet entered the externship portion of their training program.
- Four pilot students remain in the program and remain committed to completion.
- Job placement for trainees remains the final challenge.

Opportunity to appropriately spend down MHSA funding targeting Workforce Education and

## **Experience in Program:**

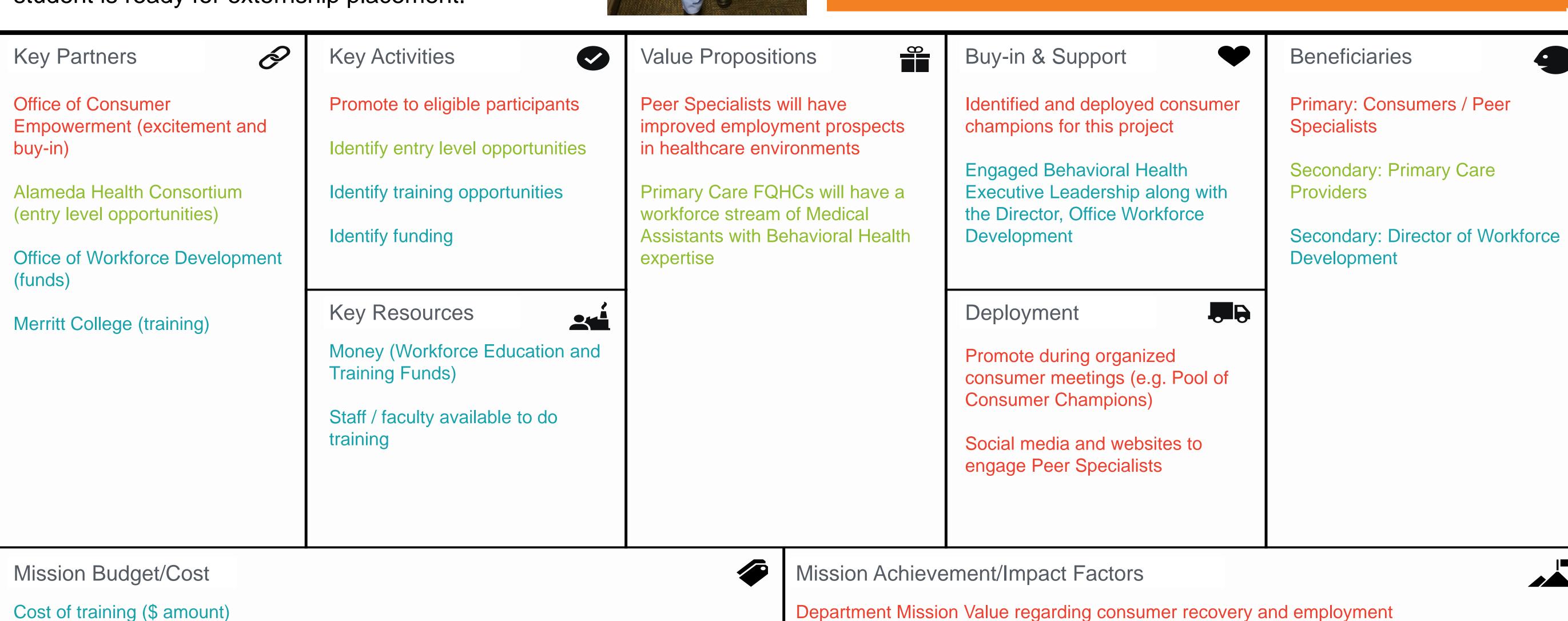
- One student left the program stating that it was "too much." One had to leave due to immigration status.
- Participation has been at varying paces. One student is ready for externship placement.

Coverage of certain expenses for participants (\$ amount)

Salary support in early (first year) employment (\$ amount)



# Mission Model Canvas



Training