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## **OMEGA FORGES LEADERSHIP TEAM OF NATIONAL EXPERTS TO ADDRESS BEST PRACTICES IN HEALING VETERANS WITH PTSD**

***Major Nisha Money, MD, James Gordon, MD, Colonel Mona Bingham, & Montel Williams, Among 25 Thought Leaders to Kick-off Effort***

RHINEBECK, NY – According to the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#), experts believe post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) occurs in up to 20% of Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, but others in the field argue that these estimates are too conservative, as not all incidences of PTSD are diagnosed or reported. Veterans returning home are faced with complex issues as they attempt to reintegrate into society, and the effects of PTSD and traumatic brain injury (TBI) on individuals, families and society are significant. In response to the growing need for support above and beyond what the current system is equipped to provide, [Omega Institute for Holistic Studies](#) has convened national experts, healing practitioners, and veteran’s advocates, including Montel Williams, to collaborate on best practices in healing modalities in an effort to help more Veterans get treatment, more quickly.

“I was honored and inspired to have had the opportunity to sit down with some of the nation’s most forward thinking professionals involved in treating PTSD, and hearing and learning about all of the wonderful work that they are doing. The Omega Institute is a paradise providing hope, healing and inspiration to all those who experience the serenity of their campus,” said Montel Williams, Emmy-award winning talk show host, a decorated former naval intelligence officer and leading advocate for Veterans.

The Omega Veterans Leadership Retreat, held May 18–20, 2011, was a 3-day gathering of thought leaders, foundations, healing practitioners, military personnel, academics, and administrators who have come together at Omega to share their experience with Veterans dealing with PTSD and TBI.

“The number of veterans suffering from PTSD is alarmingly high, and growing on a daily basis. Suicide, homelessness, drug use, and spousal abuse are just a few of the ways that PTSD manifests itself with veterans. For more than 20 years, Omega has provided programs addressing this subject as a way of supporting veterans and affected family members,” said Carla Goldstein, chief external affairs officer and director of the Women’s Institute at Omega.

The Veterans Leadership Retreat was created in order to: examine the challenges of reintegration into society, learn about healing modalities, address the obstacles of introducing new forms of treatment on a large scale, identify challenges, and offer solutions. The group’s aim is to identify achievable goals and introduce mechanisms for making change that are measurable, accessible, and effective. Examples of healing modalities being explored include: Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), Trauma Releasing Exercises (TRE), Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT),

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), Brainspotting, yoga, acupuncture, and more.

“Acupuncturists Without Borders has been helping heal the wounds of war with free acupuncture clinics since 2006. We are so grateful that Omega Institute has now gathered, for the first time, leaders from around the U.S. who are doing mind-body healing work for veterans and their families. Mind-body medicine can heal PTSD in ways that are completely unique because lasting trauma is a mind-body phenomenon. This gathering is creating a synergy and momentum with tremendous potential to help heal the tens of thousands of troops currently returning to the U.S. with acute stress and PTSD, as well as veterans of past wars.” said Diana Fried, founder and executive director of Acupuncturists Without Borders and an attendee of Omega’s Veterans Leadership Retreat.

“I have just spent 15 hours with men and women who are professionals helping veterans and family members address the debilitating consequences of PTSD. If desire was energy, this group could move the world,” said George Kaufman, development director, emeritus, at Omega. “No one attending had any illusions about the road ahead and its ever present challenges, and no one retreated a single step from the work to be done in order to make a difference in the lives of veterans and their families,” concluded Kaufman.

The Omega Veterans Leadership Retreat was made possible, in part, through the generous support of: Tom Kearns, [Gallagher Family Fund](#), and [Tommie Copper, Inc.](#)

#### **About Omega Institute for Holistic Studies**

*Founded in 1977, Omega Institute for Holistic Studies is the nation’s most trusted source for wellness and personal growth. As a nonprofit organization, Omega offers diverse and innovative educational experiences that inspire an integrated approach to personal and social change. Located on 195 acres in the beautiful Hudson Valley, Omega welcomes more than 23,000 people to its workshops, conferences, and retreats in Rhinebeck, New York, and at exceptional locations around the world. eOmega.org*

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