



**Tai Sophia  
Institute**

**For Immediate Release**

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**Tai Sophia Institute Graduates at Forefront of Wellness Revolution**

**LAUREL, MD (June 10, 2009)** – At Monday night’s annual commencement ceremony at The Jim Rouse Theatre for the Performing Arts in Columbia, MD, Tai Sophia Institute ([www.tai.edu](http://www.tai.edu)) proudly acknowledged 91 master’s program graduates – 57 in Acupuncture, eight in Herbal Medicine, and 26 in Applied Healing Arts. This year marks the largest graduating class in the Applied Healing Arts program since its inception in 2002.

A preeminent academic institution for wellness-based education, clinical care, research, and public policy discourse, Tai Sophia Institute offers the nation’s first accredited acupuncture program, the nation’s first and only Master of Science degree in Herbal Medicine, and the innovative Master of Arts in Applied Healing Arts (AHA) program. Tai Sophia is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and is located in Howard County, MD – a county that is nationally recognized for innovations in health and wellness.

Among the Master of Acupuncture graduates is Jade Connelly-Duggan, daughter of Tai Sophia co-founders President Robert Duggan, M.Ac. (UK), and Chancellor Dianne Connelly, Ph.D., M.Ac. (UK). Duggan and Connelly pioneered the presence and accreditation of acupuncture in Maryland and the United States 35 years ago.

Speaking to the graduates about their pivotal role in shifting the current disease-care system to a wellness system, Duggan said, “You are graduating at an extraordinary moment – when observing ancient wisdom and paying attention to nature are more observably essential than ever before.”

Nasir I. Bhatti, M.D., Associate Professor of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery, Johns Hopkins University, delivered the commencement address “Mind the Gap.” In his address, Bhatti pointed to the gaps in the current U.S. healthcare system -- between West and East, allopathic medicine and complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), cost and resources, access and quality, and especially the gap between doctor and patient. “We need to be open and engaged in cross-cultural dialogue if we are serious about overcoming the current healthcare crisis,” said Bhatti.

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Bhatti called this “a time of a new beginning” and, quoting Margaret Mead, emphasized the power of a small group of people to make transformational change.

Earlier this year, Duggan and other Tai Sophia representatives testified before Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions at a hearing entitled “Principles of Integrative Health: A Path to Health Care Reform.” Duggan’s testimony, “The American Wellness System: An Alternative Way of Thinking,” is available [here](#).

[More About Tai Sophia](#): Founded in 1975 as a small healing arts clinic, Tai Sophia’s diverse offerings now include accredited graduate academic programs, continuing education, community wellness programs, and clinical services in acupuncture, herbal medicine and nutrition counseling (offered through the Institute’s Natural Care Center located on the Laurel main campus, as well as at satellite clinics in Baltimore and Silver Spring). The Institute’s main campus also houses a public library, an herbal dispensary, a retail bookstore, the Himmelfarb Art Gallery, and herb and meditation gardens.

The Institute’s faculty, staff, and students donate more than 15,000 community service hours to a variety of projects, and its practitioners provide more than 35,500 treatments and consultations annually. For additional information, please visit the [press section](#) of our website.

***(NOTE TO EDITORS: Commencement ceremony photos available by request.)***

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