

## State-Wide Dentistry Program Bill Launched By Senator Rauch

RALEIGH — A statewide preventive dentistry program among both adults and youngsters will be launched under bills introduced in the N. C. Senate.

Sen. Marshall A. Rauch of Gastonia introduced the two measures in behalf of the Joint Com-

mittee on Dental Education, of which he is chairman.

The bills would implement major recommendations evolving from the committee's 18-month study of North Carolina's dental health deficiencies.

One of Rauch's bills seeks \$545,050 for a statewide campaign to prevent dental ills through plaque control, a new method of attacking tooth decay and gum problems.

The other measure would provide \$77,706 for water system fluoridation assistance to 40 rural schools. The idea here is to reach rural youngsters presently unexposed to the advantages of fluoridated water during the critical teeth-forming years of adolescence and early teens. Seven of the state's 1,100 rural schools already have such programs.

In support of his bills, Rauch notes that North Carolina now has only about one half as many dentists per unit of population as the nation as a whole. Additionally, he says, a maldistribution of available dentists means that in some areas of the state the percentage of persons treated for dental ills is as low as 14 to 15 per cent of the population.

"It should be noted, too," the senator says, "that increasing the number of graduating dentists by roughly 50 per year would require a capital expenditure of between \$6 and \$10 million, plus another \$2 million per year in operating costs."

"While we must make financial arrangements to train and graduate more dentists to im-

prove our present ratio of one dentist to every 3,600 North Carolinians, it seems obvious to me and to the Joint Committee on Dental Education that we must also make a determined and less expensive start toward preventing tooth and gum diseases that are clearly preventable."

Rauch says studies have convinced him that a vigorous program of preventive dentistry in North Carolina should reduce the amount of dental disease in the coming generation of young people as much as 30 to 50 per cent.

"So what we're doing," he explains, "is asking for funds enough to enable the State Board of Health to set North Carolina on the road toward licking its dental problems through prevention in much the same way that polio was licked by preventive action."

Salaries, equipment and supplies for a cadre of 20 dental hygienists to implement major innovations in the preventive dental program would cost \$500,050.

The same bill asks for \$45,000 to provide special training for private practicing dentists in plaque control techniques and to initiate plaque control programs for the public.

Effectively implemented plaque control can prevent up to 90 per cent of all dental ills, Rauch maintains.

"This kind of preventive potential takes on dynamic dimensions," he says, "when one considers that an estimated 514,000 North Carolinians already are without teeth, including 60,120 who don't even have dentures."

Further, emphasis upon repair and restoration at the ex-

pense of preventive effort has created a reservoir of dental neglect so vast that Medicaid during this biennium alone will spend the staggering sum of \$8.5 million on dental care for the medically indigent."

The \$77,706 sought for the rural school program would provide for "the purchase of necessary equipment, supplies and materials to fluoridate approximately 40 rural school water systems" and to provide salaries for two engineering technicians.

Fluoridated drinking water presently is dispensed in 99 North Carolina municipalities. An estimated 440,000 urban youngsters are growing up on fluoridated water.

State and national studies have established a 65 per cent reduction in the tooth decay rate among children who have been exposed to fluoridated water from infancy into their teens.

Rauch says, "That fantastic benefit has been routinely denied youngsters living in rural areas. This bill merely seeks to eradicate that denial by expanding a very promising program already in effect at seven rural schools."

U. S. Public Health Service studies cited in a report of the Joint Committee on Dental Education show the promise of a one-third decrease in cavities among youngsters provided with fluoridated water during school hours only.

"Now, one-third is a long way

## Bloody Holiday Easter Weekend

RALEIGH — "Let's turn back the tide."

That was the admonition today from Motor Vehicles Commissioner Joe Garrett as North Carolina approached one of its traditionally bloody weekends — the Easter holiday.

Garrett's reference is to the fact that, after two consecutive years of reduced highway fatalities, the death rate on our streets and highways is currently trending ahead of the 1970 figure.

The commissioner pointed out that there were 1,125 highway crashes during the four-day 1970 Easter holiday period. Five hundred and sixty-eight people were injured and 23 died.

"In well over 1,000 of those accidents," Garrett said, "violations of the motor vehicle laws were clearly indicated. Speeding, failing to yield the right-of-way, and driving to the left of the center line accounted for over-

from the 65 per cent decrease documented among children who drink such water" around the clock. But we must begin extending even that much advantage to our rural youngsters. And \$77,706 is a small enough price to pay for that beginning," Rauch concludes.

or half of the violations — and, of course, we know from experience that driving under the influence was a factor in at least half of the crashes resulting in fatalities. Adding to the threat is the fact that, already in 1971, we have added more than 140,000 new motor vehicles to our last year's total."

Garrett said the State Highway Patrol will be on the roads "in maximum force" throughout the weekend, giving special attention to speeders and drinking

drivers, but he added that "the driver himself will determine whether we enter the spring and summer vacation period on a happy or tragic note."

The commissioner concluded: "Don't think it can't happen to you. It can. And experience tells us there will be at least 1,000 accidents on our streets and highways this weekend. Don't be one of them."

Increased payments averaging between 9 and 10 per cent for 14 million vets and survivors on VA pension rolls are provided in a bill signed last December by the President.

VA announced recently that a record \$275 million in dividends will be paid this year to more than 4.1 million veterans holding WW I and WW II insurance policies.

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Call the City Garage for Removal of Trash, Garbage, etc. Call John Knox McGill, Woodrow Laughter or Any Member of Scout Troop 92 for Removal of Junk Cars, at No Expense to Property Owners. Let's Get to Work **NOW!**

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