



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Monday, April 7, 2008**

**SENATE PRESIDENT WILLIAMS, HOUSE SPEAKER AMANN  
JOIN IN KICKOFF OF “CONNECTICUT MISSION OF MERCY”**

*CTMOM to Provide Free Dental Services to Hundreds of Connecticut Residents In Need*

HARTFORD – Senate President Don Williams (D-Brooklyn) and Speaker of the House James Amann (D-Milford) today joined leaders of the Connecticut Mission of Mercy (CTMOM) at a press conference to kick off a week that will culminate this Saturday and Sunday with the state’s largest-ever free dental clinic.

The Connecticut Mission of Mercy, a collaborative volunteer effort that will include more than 700 dentists, hygienists, and assistants providing free dental screenings and care to hundreds of Connecticut residents in need, will be held at the former Tolland High School this weekend (Saturday, April 12 from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, April 13 from 5 a.m. to 12 p.m.).

Senator Williams and Speaker Amann, along with other legislative leaders, joined CTMOM organizers at a press conference in Room 1C of the Legislative Office Building today to promote the weekend’s massive undertaking, as well as to spotlight the need for comprehensive dental care reform in Connecticut. Dental services – including cleanings, fillings, extractions, and other procedures – will be provided to hundreds of Connecticut residents on a first-come, first-serve basis.

“This is the first time Connecticut has hosted a Mission of Mercy Project and it couldn’t happen at a more critical time,” said Senator Williams. “Many adults and children in Connecticut don’t have access to dental care, and in Eastern Connecticut the problem could get even worse: There simply aren’t enough dentists. This Mission of Mercy Project will not only help hundreds of families, it highlights the need for real health care reform. The work we’ve accomplished in the General Assembly is a critical part of this mission. We have increased reimbursement rates for dentists who participate in the HUSKY program, ensuring that our neediest children can get the care they deserve, and we have established health care authorities that are studying ways to achieve universal health care.”

“There is a serious need for better access for dental care for the people of Connecticut, and while the Mission of Mercy isn’t going to solve the problem, it’s a great way to start and to shed some light on the issue. I applaud the Connecticut Mission of Mercy and the hundreds of volunteers who are coming together this weekend to help so many Connecticut residents,” Speaker Amann said today.

“Connecticut Mission of Mercy was organized to meet a critical need in Connecticut,” Connecticut Mission of Mercy Co-Chair Dr. Robert Schreiber said today. “There are 1 million people

in Connecticut who do not have adequate dental care. This is why we are holding the state's first Mission of Mercy, and this is why we need to see a collaborative effort between all parties – legislators, advocates, community leaders and more – to address our dental health crisis to ensure that all Connecticut residents have access to quality dental care.”

The equipment necessary for the event will be trucked in from other states. The day before the event, volunteer dentists and their staff will assemble largest temporary dental office ever created in Connecticut.

Organizations that have contributed or pledged assistance to the event include: The Connecticut State Dental Association and component societies, Connecticut State Dental Foundation, Bank of New York Mellon, and Doral Dental; Sullivan Schein Dental Supply Company; Webster Bank; Rockville Bank; Connecticut Health Foundation; Hartford Foundation for Public Giving; Hartford Hospital; and Pierre Fauchard Academy,

The first Mission of Mercy event took place in Virginia in 2001. Mission of Mercy (MOM) projects have broken two and three day records for the largest dental outreach clinics ever conducted in the United States. Since the inception of the program, \$7.4 million of free dental care has been delivered to more than 18,000 Mission of Mercy patients.

“Charity is no substitute for health care policy, but what CTMOM provides us is a great start,” Dr. Schreibman added. “We’re hoping that this weekend is the start of a major movement in Connecticut towards substantial dental care reform.”

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**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

- Please indicate this event is first-come, first-served only. Appointments will not be made in advance.
- Children under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to receive treatment.