

Deadly smoke

RALEIGH County physician John Cannell doesn't hesitate to jump feet first into a brawl.

When he saw inferiority and incompetence in Raleigh schools, he started a hard-hitting statewide reform committee that rocked the educational establishment.

Now a patient's tragedy has spurred him into another blitzkrieg. He found lung cancer in a mother of three, and her impending death moved him to make an unusual assault on cigarettes.

Dr. Cannell bought newspaper adver-

tisements announcing that his Beaver clinic no longer will treat patients who smoke.

"I just got tired and really questioned whether I should be taking care of people consciously addicted to a drug as dangerous as tobacco," he said.

"... If a physician's emphasis is on health, it is illogical for me to pretend that addiction to ... tobacco is compatible with health. Tobacco is easily the most dangerous drug in the United States today."

He said tobacco kills more Americans

each year than World War II did — and kills more each day than cocaine does in a year.

"More vegetables are created every hour from cigarettes than in a year from illegal drugs," he said — adding that people who smoke have no right to criticize other narcotics.

Cannell's shock treatment accomplished its purpose of grabbing attention. His office received angry calls. It also received pleas from people wanting to be enrolled in break-the-habit courses.

This blunt confrontation is one of many which smokers can expect. Crack-downs are coming from every angle. Cigarettes are destined to be scourged from the mainstream of U.S. life.

A recent surgeon general report saying that "secondhand smoke" causes lung cancer in non-smokers is expected to lead to a smoking ban in all public buildings and workplaces. Puffers no longer can contend they aren't harming people around them.

Before long, Cannell's scornful attitude will be standard nearly everywhere.