Governor Michael S. Dukakis

By Ron Norman

Massachusetts law enforcement agencies are taking increasingly strong measures to control drunken driving around colleges, Gov. Michael S. Dukakis said at a press conference at the State House yesterday.

"We're not doing this to arrest kids," Dukakis said. He said the state hopes students "will be part of the solution, not part of the problem — or heaven forbid, part of the statistics."

About 450 people will die in traffic accidents in Massachusetts this year, according to Charles V. Barry, state secretary of public safety. Over half the deaths will be related to alcohol, and half those killed will be under age 24, he said.

Over the last 10 years, Dukakis said, October has been the worst month for deaths on state highways, perhaps because of the influx of college students and the start of the football season.

The state's roadblock program, under which police have been stopping large numbers of motorists on weekends to check for intoxication, is a recent effort to curb drunken driving, Dukakis said.

The state began the program July 1 to deter driving under the influence of alcohol. The program will continue at Dukakis' urging, according to a letter sent to college presidents in August.

The federal government gives Massachusetts $27 million each year to enforce drunken driving prevention laws, Dukakis explained, to the point of buying $12,000 for the roadblock program. The commonwealth pays the remaining costs for the roadblocks, he added.

Massachusetts saw fewer highway fatalities this summer than in any summer in the last 10 years, Dukakis said. Between July 1 and Labor Day weekend, 117 people were killed on highways, compared to 139 for the same period last year.

"The roadblocks . . . have had a significant deterrent effect," Dukakis said. The state will set up roadblocks at college campuses, much like those at high school proms last spring, he added.

Drunken driving laws in Massachusetts call for a fine of $100 to $1,000, up to two years imprisonment and a one-year license suspension for first-time offenders. The offender may instead be placed on probation and required to attend a two-week residential alcohol treatment program at a $70 fee, with a two-year license suspension.

Third offenders may be fined $500 to $1,000, must serve 60 days in jail, may be sentenced to up to two years' imprisonment, and will lose their licenses for five years. "It's a tough law — a second offense and you go to jail," Barry said.

Second convictions carry a fine of $300 to $1,000, a one-week mandatory jail sentence and possible imprisonment for up to two years. The offender may instead...