

# Liberals condemn lack of hyperbaric chamber

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The provincial Liberals are expressing concern over the lack of an operating hyperbaric chamber in this province.

The chamber is used to treat patients who, for example, have become oxygen deprived through smoke inhalation.

Earlier this week, a Kilbride woman pulled from a burning house had to be flown to Halifax for treatment in a chamber.

The Liberals first expressed concern over the lack of a functioning chamber during the spring sitting of the House of Assembly, and again in a news release Friday afternoon.

"We have spoken to sources with Eastern Health who have confirmed the hyperbaric chamber is not functioning and little has been done to correct the problem over the past several months," said Kelvin Parsons in the release.

"It now appears that patients are being flown out of the province to receive this vital health-care service because our government cannot attract and retain staff to operate the chamber."

But that's not exactly true, according to Eastern Health.

A spokeswoman told The Telegram Friday the chamber is actually owned by Memorial University, and the health authority normally has access to it.

The problem is the MUN technician who operates it has been on leave since February.

It's Eastern Health's understanding the technician will return to work next month.

At that time, the health authority plans to ask the technician to train two of its employees on how to use the chamber so it may be used when he is not available in the future.

The spokeswoman also said the Kilbride woman is the first to be flown out of province for treatment in a hyperbaric chamber since the technician left.

She added there are normally other treatments available to patients besides the chamber.



*Kelvin Parsons*