

**CORRECTION**

An error appeared in a sports brief in Wednesday's *Yellowknifer* ("Drillers win one at nationals," Oct. 15). Incorrect information was supplied on the tournament website. Dana Harris scored the Drillers' goal. Also, Quesnel, B.C. was spelled incorrectly in the article, "Wood pellet stoves in high demand." Additionally, NAAS Enterprises had a wood pellet boiler on display at the wood pellet fair two weeks ago not a furnace. *Yellowknifer* apologizes for any embarrassment or confusion caused by the errors.

**NEWS**

**Briefs**

**Arson suspect escapes**

Sheila Jewell, the woman alleged to have set a fire that burned down eight townhouses at Bison Estates, has escaped from jail in Fort Smith. According to the RCMP, Jewell and another inmate, Toni-Lynn Buggins, escaped through a window at the women's correctional centre. Buggins was scheduled to appear in Yellowknife Territorial Court on Tuesday to face numerous charges including possession of property obtained by a crime. The women are said to have fled Oct. 12. Police said in a statement both women are believed to have immediately fled to Alberta and are possibly in the company of a man named Greg Buffalo. RCMP are asking anyone with information to contact police.

- Cara Loverock

**RCMP to show bikes**

Yellowknife RCMP will be allowing the public to take a look at all the bicycles in their possession on Thursday, Oct. 30. People who have had a bike lost or stolen can stop by the detachment between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to see if their bike is there. Proof of ownership must be provided before any bike is released.

- Cara Loverock

**Fall library book sale**

The public is invited to the Yellowknife Public Library's fall book sale next week in the library meeting room. The sale will take place Oct. 23-25 starting on Thursday, Oct. 23 from 6 to 9 p.m. On Friday, Oct. 24, from 12 to 8 p.m. and on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

- Cara Loverock

**Suicide documentary**

The Franco-cultural Association of Yellowknife will host a screening of the French language film *Le Voyage d'une Vie* next week. The film is a documentary based on the personal story of Maryse Chatrand, the producer of the film. The screening will take place at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre on Monday, Oct. 20 starting at 7 p.m.

- Cara Loverock

**Have your say**

Do you think the territorial government should implement a carbon tax? Have your say at [nns.com/yellowknifer](http://nns.com/yellowknifer). Poll results will be published in next Friday's *Yellowknifer*.

**Markets:**

Gold: \$802.50  
Last week: \$883.50  
Cdn dollar: 83.67  
Last week: 87.06  
Bank of Canada overnight rate: 2.5%

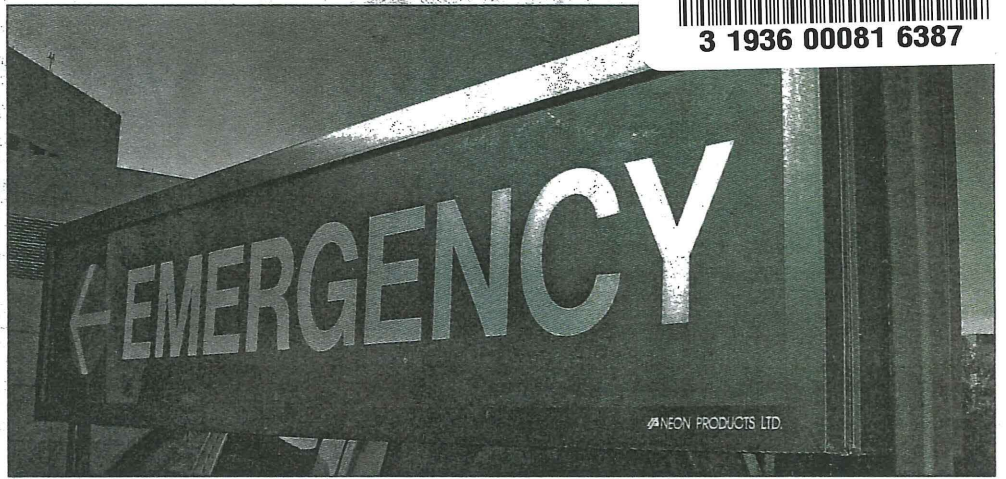
**feature news**

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**After being medevaced from Yellowknife, a stroke victim spent 34-hours in an Edmonton Emergency room.**

Lauren McKeon/NNSL Photo



# 34-hour wait

Young woman with baby medevaced to full hospital after stroke

by Lauren McKeon  
Northern News Services

A Yellowknife woman in her early 30s who suffered a stroke was forced to spend 34 hours in an Edmonton hospital emergency waiting room after being knowingly referred there even though the beds were all full.

Yellowknife Centre MLA Robert Hawkins is looking for answers – and an apology – from Health Minister Sandy Lee.

According to Hawkins, the department received a memo stating the hospital was at full capacity at least a week before – yet the woman was sent there anyway.

"I was using all of my powers and authorities available to me to help this NWT resident who is being cared for in emergency without being able to find her own room," Lee said during Tuesday's legislative assembly session.

**No rooms**

"It's not that she needed to go to Edmonton," said Hawkins.

"It's not that she needed to go to the emergency. It's (that) she spent 34 hours in the emergency. That is ridiculous. Why are we sending people to Edmonton if they have no rooms?"

Greg Cummings, the deputy minister for the Department of Health and Social Services, confirmed his department received a memo about the lack of beds at the hospital the woman was sent to but added that they receive these sorts of memos all the time.

"Bed shortages and wait lists are

a reality of the health care system everywhere in the country but it doesn't stop the healthcare system from providing services," he said.

"I said in the house yesterday I am aware that capital health is under what's called full capacity protocol," Lee said Thursday.

"If somewhere is full, it doesn't mean we won't send them there," she added.

"The important point is a doctor here keeps medical observation of the patient and they decide whether someone should be sent out of here or not.

"They decide where that person will go," she said.

At Thursday's session of the assembly Hay River South MLA Jane Groenewegen asked Lee whether the long wait was indicative of a drop in the service NWT residents may be receiving, noting the University of Alberta hospital is recognized as one of the best for service in Canada.

Lee did not directly acknowledge receipt of the memo on the filled hospital. Cummings later confirmed with *Yellowknifer* that because notifications regarding hospital capacity are routine, he does not pass them on to Lee unless there are unusual circumstances – and unfortunately having no available beds is not unusual.

"We know all the time," said Cummings. "What happened here was very routine. It's unfortunate."

Both Lee and Hawkins were contacted by the woman's husband – who asked that he and his wife's names be withheld – after he was told his wife would have to spend nearly a

week waiting in the emergency room with nothing but a curtain shielding her from the rest of the room.

We "were informed by the hospital that she'd have to stay until Friday for tests and they wouldn't have a room for them at all in the duration of their stay because they were booked solid," the husband said.

The woman was taken to Stanton Territorial Hospital after she showed signs of a stroke early Monday morning. Tests were taken and doctors were called in Edmonton. At about 7 p.m. the woman was flown to a hospital there so she could have access to neurology and cardiology services not available in the territory.

According to her husband, that hospital was the University of Alberta Hospital; according to Lee it was the Royal Alexandra Hospital.

Accompanying her to the hospital were her infant, who is breastfeeding and cannot be separated from her, and her husband's daughter from a previous relationship, who was taking care of the infant.

**Emergency sleep over**

"They all spent the night in emergency, with the drape around them, the three of them," the husband said. "There was no way my family was going to spend another night in emergency."

"She had a stroke, she shouldn't be in that type of environment, especially trying to care for a three-month-old baby."

Wednesday morning the woman was moved into a room where she will stay until Friday night or Saturday morning.

"I don't understand why they wouldn't find another facility in Edmonton or in another city that



Sandy Lee says she did her best to find the woman a room of her own.

could handle a patient. Calgary is 20 minutes farther away. She needed immediate care."

According to Cummings, sending a patient outside of Edmonton – the first destination for NWT patients – is beyond Yellowknife's control. Referrals to southern hospitals are made on a physician-to-physician basis, he said.

"What happens is if the bed situation is okay (in a southern hospital), the patient goes directly to that bed and if not they're admitted through the emergency department," said Cummings.

While the man is happy his wife's situation is resolved, he worries about others who may get stuck the same way and get third-class treatment because they're from the NWT.

"If we're paying for this service in Edmonton, then we better be making sure we're getting that service," said the patient's husband.

If that's the best Edmonton can offer then we should be looking at another city."

**"They all spent the night in emergency."**



**Monday in News/North**

**Ndilo paving hits a bump**

**Feds pull out of negotiations to consult their lawyers**

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