



## UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND MEDICAL CENTER

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **R ADAMS COWLEY SHOCK TRAUMA CENTER RECEIVES NEW HYPERBARIC CHAMBER**

On Saturday, March 14, a new, state-of-the-art hyperbaric chamber was delivered to the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center located at the University of Maryland Medical Center. The new chamber is one of the largest in the country. It replaces an older model at the Shock Trauma Center, which is the only hyperbaric chamber in Maryland available for the treatment of patients.

The new chamber, which resembles a giant blue submarine, arrived from Florida after a 6-day journey aboard a mammoth 38-wheel truck. Special cranes lifted the 52 foot long, 130,000 pound chamber into place. The chamber will be housed in a new 10,000 square foot building which will include space for pre-treatment patient assessment and wound care, as well as professional offices, a conference area for patients, and rooms for technical, safety and patient monitoring equipment.

"This new chamber will allow us to provide the highest level of care to a larger number of patients," says Roy A.M. Myers, M.D., director of the Center for Hyperbaric Medicine. "We will now be able to treat as many as 20 patients at a time, whereas we could

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only treat 12 before," says Myers. About 400 patients from throughout Maryland and the world currently receive hyperbaric therapy each year at the University of Maryland Medical Center.

In the hyperbaric chamber, patients breathe 100 percent oxygen delivered in a pressurized environment. The pressures in the chamber are adjusted to the treatment depth required for individual patient needs, ranging from 17 to 165 feet below sea level. Hyperbaric oxygen is used to treat a number of acute and chronic medical conditions, including carbon monoxide poisoning, smoke inhalation, burns, gas gangrene, crush injuries, as well as decompression sickness and air embolisms caused by scuba diving. Patients with wounds that won't heal, such as diabetic ulcers and chronic osteomyelitis and those suffering from the chronic side effects of radiation therapy will also benefit from the new chamber. The pressurized environment also promotes healing after reattachment of ears and noses.

The new chamber will form the core of the Center for Hyperbaric Medicine, a \$3.8 million project which also includes a new building in which the chamber will be housed, and installation. The new chamber is expected to be ready to treat patients in June.

In addition to patient treatment, the center educates and trains medical professionals and conducts research into a number of areas, including toxic substance exposure, carbon monoxide poisoning, decompression sickness and AIDS-related complications.

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The Center is also the hub of a statewide network for firemen and other victims of carbon monoxide poisoning, smoke inhalation and burns. It also serves as a clearinghouse for the national Diving Alert Network (DAN), directing scuba diving accident victims in the northeast region to the closest hyperbaric chamber and providing simulation training for new divers.

The old chamber, installed in 1967, is located in one of the buildings which the University of Maryland Medical Center will tear down so that a new patient tower can be constructed beginning this summer. It would have cost more to move and modernize the old hyperbaric chamber than to install a new one.

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