

EC health department to start new financial year with R4.8bn in unpaid bills

By [Estelle Ellis](#)

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When the new financial year starts next week, the Eastern Cape Department of Health will have R4.8bn in unpaid bills for crucial medical supplies, fleet services, phone bills, medicine, medical gas and municipal services for the province's ambulances and hospital services.



Source: [Rxabay](#)

The Department's landline phone bill alone is R36.5m. Leaving this bill unpaid has caused an outage at all the province's emergency medical services call centres (for state ambulances). Telkom blocked the landlines to these call centres. The department initially described the problem as "a technical difficulty".

Officials had to scramble to set up a new system to tide them over until 1 April, when they could pay the bill.

Read the [full article](#) by Estelle Ellis at *Daily Maverick*.

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