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BUSINESS

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BY **MOTLHAPING MODISE** – 20 HOURS AGO NO COMMENTS 7 VIEWS

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) has threatened to collapse the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) over its exorbitant contribution increases that it maintains will continue to burden their members.

This after the union, together with other unions in the public sector announced over the weekend a possible national programme of action later in the month to protest against what it described as GEMS unilateral decision to increase member's contributions.

The scheme has implemented a 9.8% increase in member contributions from January 2026, which will be adjusted to 9.5% from 1st April 2026.

Speaking on YOU FM Newshour, PSA's General Manager Reuben Maleka accused the GEMS board and senior management of arrogance and implementation of skewed priorities ahead of its members.

“We have been asking a simple question as to why it was necessary for the Board to meet 53 times, which means they met every week last year.

We wanted to know how much it cost the Board to call those meetings, but they refused to divulge that information to us,” said Maleka.

Maleka warned that they have planned a series of activities against the scheme, including a protest and withdrawal of membership from the scheme.

“Besides a mass action programme planned against GEMS, one of the actions that will follow is that if they continue to be arrogant and not willing to come down to listen to what our members are saying, we will ultimately call on our members to leave GEMS for a year or two let it collapse, close down and be liquidated and then let's get a fresh medical aid that can be reasonable,” warned the General Manager.

Maleka also accused the scheme of withholding important information from the unions.

“We want to know how much GEMS is paying its executives, still they refuse to tell us.

They've got a new building in an exclusive area in Pretoria called Menlyn Maine.

They've got that nice building, which is less than 10 years old, now they want to buy another land and build for what we don't know,” remarked Maleka

The PSA has called on GEMS to reconsider its decision to further revise down its increases of 9.5% which was implemented last month.

“Remember this increase was reduced from 9.8% after they regretted what they have done and promised that the increase will be 9.5% started from April this year which is only the difference of 0.3%.

So that does not bring any relief to already struggling public servants noting that these increases combine has reached 23.2% in a period of two years, while the employees’ salaries have increased by merely 8% which defeats the purpose of why they must have a medical aid,” explained Maleka.

The PSA has lambasted GEMS, calling it a monopoly of medical aid in the public service, hence its decision to ignore the plight of its members in the public sector.

“Initially, the rule was that if you are a public servant and you don’t belong to GEMS you don’t get a subsidy so without a subsidy none of the public servants can afford medical aid.

GEMS have taken advantage of that, knowing that public servants have no other choice.”

We are now saying the time has arrived for open competition (for other medical aid) to also be equally subsidised so that there’s freedom of choice.

There’s a push back against that because they (GEMS) know they will not make it due to their greediness,” concluded Maleka.

Author



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