

**MEDIA RELEASE**

PSA rejects GEMS meaningless 9.5% contribution-increase adjustment from 9.8% as insult to workers

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EMBARGO

None

ENQUIRIES

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), strongly condemns and rejects the recent announcement by the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) of a so-called “revised” 9.5%-member contribution increase for 2026.

This is a minor reduction from the originally proposed 9.8% and is nothing more than an insult adjustment designed to aggravate members anger whilst public servants continue to shoulder unsustainable financial pressure. Recent reporting confirms that the decision by GEMS to shift from 9.8% to 9.5% was made unilaterally, despite firm objections by labour and without genuine engagement in the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council.

The PSA views this as an insult to workers. It is a transparent attempt to take public servants for fools by presenting a 0.3% adjustment as a concession, when, in reality, it offers no meaningful financial relief to employees already struggling under rising living costs.

The PSA has previously noted assumptions by GEMS, such as inflated subsidy projections, are illogical and misleading, further undermining trust in the Scheme’s financial modelling.

At a time when wage adjustments remain minimal and living expenses continue to soar, medical-aid increases of this magnitude are unacceptable and unjustifiable. The PSA rejects the narrative that a 9.5% increase is the “best possible offer”. Instead, it reflects poor financial planning, a lack of accountability, and an unwillingness to explore alternative cost-saving measures that do not punish members. The PSA will push for the urgent involvement of the Council for Medical Schemes to address solvency and governance concerns raised.

The PSA rejects the revised 9.5% increase in the strongest possible terms. It is not a concession, not a solution, and certainly not a gesture of goodwill. Instead, it is a dismissive and tokenistic adjustment that leaves workers worse off whilst pretending to offer relief.

END

