

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA supports GEMS call for caution on consolidation of medical schemes for public servants
DATE	11 November 2018
EMBARGO	None
ENQUIRIES	communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) welcomes the call by the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) to carefully reconsider the process of consolidation of medical-aid schemes into GEMS.

GEMS has warned that consolidation will require careful planning and consultation with unions. It has also indicated that the process should be led by government and properly negotiated with employees.

“The PSA supports the call by GEMS as this cannot be a one-sided decision. All stakeholders must be involved to ensure that the consolidation benefits all public servants. Medical-aid schemes have different benefits for their members and public servants already face challenges with GEMS to ensure basic payments of service providers and obtaining prior authorisation for hospital admission. All medical-aid schemes should have their house in order prior to considering a merger. Consolidation should benefit members and not subject them to a worse state of affairs,” said PSA General Manager, Ivan Fredericks.

The PSA, whilst indicating that the Union supports the move towards the principles of implementing a National Health Insurance and recognises that GEMS is vital to ensure the success of the program, it is important to note that the operational affairs at GEMS are not currently desirable and not conducive for a merger. “Contributions by the state to medical aids are also questionable as there are reports from members that government has not complied with implementing full contributions. The process needs to be transparent and all affected parties must be in agreement before any merger can be considered,” said Mr Fredericks.

END