

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA warns against increases in public servants' medical-aid contributions**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing more than 230 000 public servants, is concerned about the request from the Government Employee's Medical Aid (GEMS) to the Council for Medical Schemes for an increase in medical-aid contributions.

GEMS is fully aware that public servants have not yet been granted their salary increases for the 2020/21-financial Year. The PSA and other unions have approached the Labour Court on this non-implementation with the salary agreement by government that was signed in the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council in 2018. Government has cited unaffordability as one of the key reasons for not implementing the last leg of three-year salary agreement.

Government may argue financial strain owing to impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and huge losses owing to corruption and mismanagement, but public servants are strained by the ever-rising costs of food, transport, and electricity, and other living expenses in the absence of budgeted salary increases.

Consideration to the plight of workers must be given and the PSA calls on the Council of Medical Schemes not to support any request for the increase in medical-aid contributions as such additional expenses will have severe repercussions for employees. Contribution increases may force employees to cancel their medical-aid membership in order to make ends meet, with a ripple effect on strained public health-care resources and facilities.

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