

FOR PSA MEMBERS: PUBLIC SERVICE COORDINATING BARGAINING COUNCIL
(PSCBC)

19-01-2021

Update: GEMS fee increase and employer contribution

Members will recall that the PSA has demanded that the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) should not effect any membership fee increases since public servants have not received any salary increases for the 2020/21-financial year.

GEMS was also petitioned by labour in the PSCBC to reconsider the percentage increase in members fees. Unfortunately, as you are aware, GEMS is a juristic person on its own, separate from Government. It is governed by a Board of Directors and regulated by the Council for Medical Schemes. The decision to increase fees was taken by the Board of Directors and approved by the Council for Medical Schemes, which determines the increase. The PSA vigorously canvassed GEMS and the Council for Medical Schemes not to effect any increases, considering the current economic situation, but to no avail. The PSA is strongly considering legal action to force GEMS/Council for Medical Schemes to reconsider the increase in membership fees, especially during a pandemic and the fragile economic climate members are facing.

The PSA has demanded that the employer should seriously consider granting employees who want to join other open schemes the same subsidy as for GEMS members to enable members to join any scheme of their choice. This will also ensure that there is more competition and members will be able to choose the most affordable health care available to them. The monopoly exercised by a few health care providers is open to abuse as seen by the recent investigative report delivered today titled "*Report finds GEMS, Medscheme and Discovery guilty of unfair treatment against black doctors*".

The PSA has demanded that the PSCBC enquires from the DPSCA when the employer's contribution (subsidy) will be increased to alleviate the burden of the GEMS increase. The PSA has requested the Director-General to respond by no later than **20 January 2021**. As soon as a response is received, members will be informed.

The PSA wants to also wish all employees who contracted COVID-19 a speedy recovery and implores all employees to stay safe.

GENERAL MANAGER