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

21-11-2023

Feedback: PSCBC GEMS Joint Working Committee meeting - 20 November 2023

GEMS medical-aid fees increase for 2024

The previous edition of the *Informus* refers (copies can be obtained on the PSA website (www.psa.co.za) or from PSA Provincial Offices). In the previously *Informus* it was reported that the GEMS management recommended a 9.5% increase in the medical-aid fees for 2024. The PSA requested members' inputs and comments regarding the increased fees. Most members who responded to the *Informus* rejected the proposed increase. Parties at the Working Committee agreed to consolidate inputs and make representation to the GEMS Board and request it to reconsider such an increase of 9.5%.

Labour maintained that GEMS should rather use reserve savings accumulated during the COVID-19 pandemic period to reduce the proposed increase. To our surprise, GEMS management reported at the meeting on 20 November 2023, that the Board already decided and confirmed the 9.5 % increase in medical-aid fees for 2024. A communication will be issued by GEMS to all members.

The PSA, as a party to the Joint Working Committee, strongly objected to the decision to increase the medical-aid fees by 9.5%. The PSA vehemently opposed the decision and did not support the increase. The PSA endeavoured to call an urgent PSCBC meeting to table its frustration and disappointment in this regard. GEMS was initially established to create affordable and accessible medical-aid products for public servants. A labour caucus meeting will be convened to develop a collective position with other recognised unions at the Council.

The PSA is of the view that the Collective Agreement (PSCBC Resolution 1/2006), which established GEMS, should be reviewed so that the PSA and other unions can make valuable inputs on any increase in medical-aid fees. The PSA cannot be in favour of a decision that perpetuates financial hardships for members. The PSA intends to table amendments to the Collective Agreement, which will allow unions more power to influence decisions on future increases.

Members will be informed of developments.

Employees who want to join the PSA can visit the PSA's website (www.psa.co.za), send an email to ask@psa.co.za or contact PSA Provincial Offices.

Reuben Maleka
GENERAL MANAGER