



FOR PSA MEMBERS: **GENERAL 21/2025**

05-12-2025

## PSA continues to REJECT GEMS 9.8% increase

Members are aware that the PSA and other public-sector unions criticised the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) for failure to consult and arbitrarily communicating an exorbitant medical-premium increase of 9.8%. However, GEMS publicly declared that it consulted with unions, which has proven to be a lie. The PSA could not let this lie remain unchallenged and adequately responded through the same media that GEMS used to expose its lies.

Members will recall that the PSA previously appeared before the Portfolio Committee on 5 November 2025 to highlight challenges faced by members and the arrogance, bad faith consultations, disregard for Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) processes and trade unions by GEMS, as well as poor governance of the Scheme.

The PSA further, through Fedusa, mounted pressure to GEMS by means of the following steps:

- Met with the Minister of the Department of Public Service and Administration and demanded his intervention.
- Wrote to the Council for Medical Schemes (CMS).
- Directed negotiators to table the agenda item at the PSCBC to amend the Resolution 1/2006 to allow for equalisation of the medical-aid subsidy to allow members to have a choice seeing that GEMS was unaffordable and arrogant.

Members are aware that GEMS was invited to the previous PSCBC meeting, which it could not attend. Subsequently, it availed itself at the PSCBC meeting on 3 December 2025. The GEMS Board, with the Principal Officer, attended the meeting wherein they were lambasted for the disrespect and failure to ensure that GEMS remains affordable.

In the meeting, all parties anonymously rejected the 9.8% increase, which is unacceptable, illogical, unaffordable, and arbitrary. GEMS acknowledged its failure to consult although it tried to apportion the blame the PSCBC's hectic schedule. GEMS also informed the PSCBC that 9.8% was approved by the CMS two days previously to the agitation of unions.

Labour made it clear that they are not interested in the justification by GEMS to support the 9.8% increase. Should GEMS not be prepared to reconsider its position, labour would consider remedies at

their disposal. Labour was clear that a repeat of the unilateral implementation of the increase of 13.40% last year will not occur again this year.

Subsequently, GEMS requested an opportunity to consider issues raised by parties, including the 9.8% increase. Parties agreed to meet on 12 December 2025 although GEMS was directed to respond before the said meeting to enable proper preparation by the PSCBC. It was resolved that the PSCBC would issue a media statement on behalf of all parties, although GEMS also offered to issue a statement. The PSCSBC media statement is *attached* for ease of reference.

The battle for affordable medical aid fees continues and members will be updated on developments.

Employees who want to join the PSA can visit the PSA website or contact PSA Provincial Offices.

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