

***For immediate release***

**05 March 2020**

**COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS**

The Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) has noted that two cases of coronavirus in South Africa were confirmed by the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) and reported by the National Department of Health (NDoH).

“Like all citizens of the world we are concerned by the global spread of the virus, particularly that the outbreak has now been confirmed in South Africa. We therefore encourage all our members who might have travelled to areas with confirmed cases, or have come into close contact with someone who has travelled to high risk areas, and thereafter experienced symptoms, to seek immediate medical attention,” said Dr Stanley Moloabi, GEMS Principal Officer.

GEMS is required to fund all clinically appropriate care and related costs, including coronavirus related testing, in line with the Council for Medical Schemes press release 3 of 2020. This release states that Medical schemes are required to cover diagnosis, treatment and care costs of clinically appropriate care as prescribed by the Medical Schemes Act of 1998. In addition, GEMS members should recognise that the NDoH has put measures in place to detect, manage and contain the spread of the virus.

“The Scheme, however, continues to emphasize the importance of observing basic hygiene to minimize the risk of infection and spread of viruses. We further urge our members to follow the guidelines published by the NICD and the NDoH,” concluded Dr Moloabi.

Members will be kept informed of any new developments through the GEMS website, social media platforms, SMS and call centre.

GEMS is South Africa’s largest restricted medical scheme, covering over 720 000 principal members and over 1.8 million dependants. GEMS is committed to excellence, sustainability and being effective in healthcare coverage. It drives transformation in the healthcare industry, aligned with the principles of universal healthcare coverage.

**Issued by: GEMS Marketing and Communications Division on behalf of the Principal Officer.**

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