

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MEDIA STATEMENT

GEMS adjusts the 2026 weighted average contribution increase to 7.5% to provide greater support to members.

Pretoria, 7 May 2026 -

The Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) has announced a further 2% reduction in member contribution increases for 2026, effective from 1 July 2026, reinforcing its commitment to supporting members. This decision upholds GEMS' founding mandate of providing public service employees with equitable access to affordable, comprehensive, and high-quality healthcare benefits.

The Scheme had initially communicated an average increase of 9.8% from 1 January 2026, which was later reduced to 9.5% from 1 February 2026. Following a detailed review, GEMS is now able to further lower the increase to the weighted average of 7.5%, providing additional relief to members while safeguarding the Scheme's long-term sustainability. This decision follows a structured empirical review by the Board of Trustees, as well as constructive engagements with the Minister for Public Service and Administration (as the employer), organised labour, and other key stakeholders. The contribution adjustment is subject to approval by the Council for Medical Schemes (CMS).

"As a Scheme, we are acutely aware of the pressure that rising costs place on our members and their families. This further reduction reflects our commitment to act in members' best interests, while ensuring the Scheme remains sustainable for the long term," said GEMS Principal Officer, Stan Moloabi.

Having due regard to the prevailing high benefit utilisation environment, GEMS has implemented a range of initiatives to contain costs, manage claims effectively, and improve operational efficiencies. These efforts have yielded positive savings for the Scheme. Importantly, this progress has created an opportunity to return value directly to members through the further reduction in contribution increases. By reinvesting efficiencies back into the Scheme, GEMS ensures that members experience real value while maintaining access to quality healthcare.

While this adjustment provides meaningful short-term relief, GEMS will continue to closely monitor claims trends and healthcare cost pressures. Contribution adjustments are largely influenced by medical inflation factors, such as rising healthcare provider tariffs, medical technology, medicine prices, and increased utilisation of healthcare services.

Since its establishment in 2004, GEMS has remained focused on improving access to healthcare for public service employees and their families. Today, the Scheme serves approximately 2.4 million beneficiaries, and their needs remain central to every decision taken. Member voices are embedded in the governance of the Scheme through elected Board representatives, structured engagement with organised labour, nationwide member roadshows, and dedicated service channels that ensure feedback is actively received and addressed.

“The decision announced today reflects our commitment to being responsive, transparent, and member-centric. GEMS will continue to engage, listen, and act in ways that uphold our mandate and deliver sustainable value to our members”, concluded Dr Moloabi.

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About GEMS

GEMS is the largest restricted membership medical scheme in South Africa, with over 890,000 principal members and more than 2.4 million beneficiaries. GEMS was created specifically to provide healthcare coverage for public service employees. Our purpose is derived from the GEMS mandate received from the government in November 2004, to ensure that there is adequate provision of healthcare coverage to public service employees that is efficient, cost-effective, and equitable, and to provide further options for those who wish to purchase more extensive coverage. GEMS is an authorised Financial Services Provider (FSP No 52861).

For more information, visit www.gems.gov.za

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