



NATIONAL NEWS FLASH

SERVING EDUCATION SINCE 1887



Visit our website: www.naptosa.org.za

NNF 8 of 2026

16 February 2026

FEDUSA UNITED ACTION ON GEMS CONTRIBUTION INCREASES

NAPTOSA calls on all members to stand united with Fedusa Unions and to come out in your numbers in support of the Day of Action on **Saturday, 21 February 2026** at the GEMS Head Office.

The recent decision by the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) to implement a 9.8% contribution increase from January 2026, followed by a 9.5% adjustment from 1 April 2026, is unacceptable and unjustifiable.

This comes on the back of a 13.4% increase in 2025 – amounting to a cumulative 23.2% increase over two years and the threat by GEMS for a further +9% increase at the end of 2026

At the same time:

- Public servants received only a 5.5% salary increase in 2025/26
- The next increase is approximately 4% in 2026/27
- The employer subsidy has increased by only 4.5% (Jan–March 2026) and 0.5% from April 2026

This mismatch represents a direct erosion of any real income. Medical aid costs are rising far above wages and inflation, effectively reducing take-home pay at a time when workers are already grappling with rising living costs.

Even more concerning, the Council for Medical Schemes proposed an average increase of 3.3% for 2026 as reasonable. GEMS proceeded with a much higher increase.

Why NAPTOSA/FEDUSA Is Taking a Stand

GEMS was established through PSCBC Resolution 1 of 2006 as a social solidarity scheme to provide affordable healthcare to public servants – particularly lower- and middle-income workers. It was never intended to operate as a commercial enterprise.

Yet we continue to see:

- Weak accountability and insufficient consequence management
- High executive and board remuneration
- Costly outsourcing of administration
- Limited transparency on operational budgets
- Failure to meaningfully consider labour's proposals to curb fraud and reduce costs
- Insufficient protection for lower-income members

Instead of addressing governance and operational shortcomings, members are being asked to carry the burden.

This is not just about a percentage increase.

It is about affordability.

It is about fairness.

It is about defending collective engagement and protecting members' hard-earned salaries.





Our Demands

NAPTOSA supports the collective demands for:

- Immediate withdrawal of the 9.8% and 9.5% increases
- A full forensic audit into governance, finances and procurement
- Transparency in operational budgets
- Review of outsourcing and cost drivers
- Alignment of executive pay with public service norms
- Implementation of anti-fraud and cost-containment measures
- Meaningful engagement within the PSCBC framework

Call to Action – 21 February 2026

We therefore call on all NAPTOSA members to:

-  Join the Day of Action
-  Stand in solidarity with fellow public servants
-  Defend affordable healthcare
-  Protect your take-home pay

Your presence matters. Your voice matters. Our unity matters.

Public servants cannot be expected to absorb governance failures and escalating costs. GEMS exists because of workers – and it must serve workers.

Let us stand together. Let us show up in our numbers. Let us defend the rights and dignity of educators and all public servants.

United we stand.

Mr BL Manuel

Executive Director