



# NATIONAL NEWS FLASH

SERVING EDUCATION SINCE 1887



Visit our website: [www.naptosa.org.za](http://www.naptosa.org.za)

NNF 17 of 2026

7 May 2026

## **GEMS: A VICTORIOUS OUTCOME FOR FEDUSA AND COSATU**

NAPTOSA, as an affiliate of FEDUSA, welcomes the outcome of the engagements between organised labour, the DPSA ministry and the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS), which resulted in the reduction of the proposed weighted contribution increase from 9.5% to 7.5%.

Whilst this may not represent a complete victory, it is nonetheless a significant achievement for workers and organised labour. It demonstrates the power of unity, collective action and sustained pressure. FEDUSA and COSATU must be commended for standing firm and refusing to accept the initial unreasonable proposal without challenge.

The first half of 2026 left a bitter taste in the mouths of public servants and GEMS members alike. Workers were confronted with unrealistic and unaffordable increases at a time when many households are already under immense financial strain. The original proposal further deepened the burden on workers who continue to carry the weight of rising living costs.

NAPTOSA therefore welcomes the progress made, albeit that the reduction effectively averages approximately 2%. We thank all members who participated in marches, engagements and mobilisation efforts aimed at placing pressure on GEMS to reconsider its position. Your voices were heard, and your activism contributed meaningfully towards this outcome.

We do, however, remain painfully aware that members are not only affected by the contribution increase itself. The reality is that many members are now expected to pay more while simultaneously experiencing a reduction in benefits and access. In practical terms, this means more money for less cover, which remains a serious concern for NAPTOSA.

We further acknowledge that the work is far from over. Immediate engagements and negotiations must commence to ensure that we avoid a repeat of this process in future years. There must be meaningful consultation, transparency and early engagement on affordability, benefit design and sustainability matters affecting members.

NAPTOSA also hopes that the GEMS Board will not penalise disciplined and responsible members for the sins of a few miscreants. The overwhelming majority of public servants utilise the Scheme responsibly and

should not be made to shoulder disproportionate consequences due to abuse or inefficiencies elsewhere in the system.

Whilst we welcome this breakthrough, we remain clear that the 2% reduction is only the beginning of a much bigger struggle ahead. There are still many outstanding matters that require urgent attention, including the fact that members were forced to carry the burden of the excessive 9.5% increase over the past six months, the alarming and unjustifiable costs associated with Board meetings and governance expenditure, and the urgent need for improved and more meaningful benefit structures for members.

NAPTOSA will continue to push for a medical scheme that prioritises members above administration, luxury expenditure and inefficiency. We encourage members to remain united, vigilant and active, because this victory has shown that when workers stand together, our voices cannot be ignored.

**Mr BL Manuel**

**Executive Director**