



## REPORT NO. 25 OF 2015

### PUBLIC SERVICE CO-ORDINATING BARGAINING COUNCIL MEETING

#### **Government Employees Medical Assistance (GEMS)**

The PSCBC task team met with GEMS delegates on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2015. This task team was established by the PSCBC to look into ways of influencing improvements in benefits to members of GEMS

The GEMS delegate presented the Benefit Design Process and product development for 2016 and beyond. The presentation focused on:

- Subsidy increases and alignment with the Medical Price Index/Inflation and increases in January of each year;
- Income band increases in line with salary increases to reduce the impact on members;
- Elimination of co-payments as well as enhancing the day-to-day benefits and their intention to workshop members on the following matters that have been raised at large:
  - Affordability;
  - Misunderstanding and the interpretation of the family practitioner nomination;
  - Mid-year exhaustion of benefits as well as out-of-pocket payment;
  - The lack of understanding of various GEMS benefits and options; and
  - On-the-counter benefits and generic substitution, including age, health and income status.

To address these challenges, GEMS will implement new communication processes, which include:

- Providing structured and additional training to Call Centres as well as walk-in staff;

- Engaging the PSCBC as well as the DPSA on a new benefit design process for 2016 and into the future;
- Embarking on national road shows between October and December; and
- Communicating extensively with the employer (HR practitioners, wellness practitioners and website publications) and unions.

### **Lifestyle Programme**

GEMS will investigate lifestyle programmes for 2017, going forward, with the aim of enhancing the lifestyle and fitness levels of members. It is envisaged that there will be rewards for members who use workplace-based exercise and other health programmes.

The next meeting will be held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2015

*– Issued by the Office of the General Secretary*