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NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTER (PHEOC), ETHIOPIA

COVID-19 PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN ETHIOPIA

WEEKLY BULLETIN

Epi-Week- 26 (June 28 – July 04, 2021)

BULLETIN Nº: 62

I. HIGHLIGHTS

- A total of 31,585 laboratory samples were tested in the Epi-Week-26 bringing the total number of samples tested to 2,885,489.
- A total of 500 new confirmed COVID-19 cases and 17 COVID-19 related deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-26 bringing the total cases and death to 275,435 and 4,331 respectively.
- A total of 206,326 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been at Home Based Isolation and Care so far; 1,279 of these are enrolled in the Epi-Week-26.

Remark: Data from Tigray regional state is as of June 28, 2021.

II. Subject in Focus: a) SARS-COV-2 new variants¹

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has revised the working definition of the existing Variants of Concern (VOC) and Variants of Interest (VOI). The revised set of definitions additionally formalizes a third category labelled 'Alerts for Further Monitoring', which includes variants with indications that they may pose a risk to global public health, depending on the evolving pandemic, but for which evidence of phenotypic or epidemiological impacts are less clear when compared to the listed VOCs or VOIs. These Alerts are reassessed regularly against criteria outlined in the VOI/VOC working definitions.
- SARS-CoV-2 Variant Working Definitions:
 - Variant of Concern
 - A SARS-CoV-2 variant that meets the definition of a VOI (see below) and, through a comparative assessment, has been demonstrated to be associated with one or more of the following changes at a degree of global public health significance:
 - Increase in transmissibility or detrimental change in COVID-19 epidemiology; OR
 - Increase in virulence or change in clinical disease presentation; OR
 - Decrease in effectiveness of public health and social measures or available diagnostics, vaccines, therapeutics.

¹ https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/weekly-epidemiological-update-on-covid-19---6-july-2021

- Variant of Interest
 - A SARS-CoV-2 variant:
 - with genetic changes that are predicted or known to affect virus characteristics such as transmissibility, disease severity, immune escape, diagnostic or therapeutic escape; AND
 - Identified to cause significant community transmission or multiple COVID-19 clusters, in multiple countries with increasing relative prevalence alongside increasing number of cases over time, or other apparent epidemiological impacts to suggest an emerging risk to global public health.
- o Alerts for Further Monitoring
 - A SARS-CoV-2 variant with genetic changes that are suspected to affect virus characteristics with some indication that it may pose a future risk, but evidence of phenotypic or epidemiological impact is currently unclear, requiring enhanced monitoring and further assessment pending new evidence.
- Some of the Variants of Interests are reclassified as 'Alerts of Further Monitoring' based upon the above working definitions. Accordingly, VOIs Epsilon (B.1.427/B.1.429), Zeta (P.2), and Theta (P.3) are reclassified as 'Alerts for further monitoring'. While all three variants carry mutations with suspected and/or established phenotypic impacts, reported detections of these variants have decreased over time, suggesting a decline in their respective incidence worldwide, and diminishing public health risks relative to other VOCs and VOIs.

b) COVID-19 plan revitalization ('Dagim Tikuret LeCOVID-19')

- The COVID-19 response revitalization movement which mainly focuses on enhancing overall COVID-19 response via increasing community awareness through Risk Communication and Community Engagement, detection capacity and improving quality care and capacity is ongoing at national and subnational level.
- In line with the revitalization plan regional support teams are deployed to regional Public Health Emergency Operation Centers and biweekly meeting with regional and national Public Health Emergency Operations Centers (PHEOC) staffs is being conducted. The biweekly meeting agenda focuses on the overall COVID-19 response plan status, detection capacity, challenges (ongoing & predicted) and support area required (identifying resources on hand and gaps).
- Seven weeks have passed since the "Dagim Tikuret LeCOVID-19" movement is launched nationally.
- All regional states have launched and initiated the movement despite low performance.
- A total of 5,910,513 house to house visits are planned to be conducted in 60 days. As of July 04, 2021, a total of 836,321 (14.10% of the total plan) house to house visits are reported from the regions and city administrations. Among these 118,402 house to house visits are conducted in the Epi-week-26.
- 587,874 laboratory tests have been planned to be performed in 60 days. As of June 27, 2021, a total of 230,552 samples (39% of the total plan) are tested nationally. Among these 29,363 samples are tested in the Epi-week-26.

III. EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SITUATION

a. Global Situation

- Globally, over 3.8 million new cases are reported in the last week (Figure 1) which is a 9% increase in the number of new cases compared to the previous week.
- More than 89 thousand new deaths (2% decrease compared to previous week) are reported globally in the Epi-week-26.
- As of July 04, 2021, a total of 180,381,741 COVID-19 cases and 3,802,952 deaths (CFR=2.11%) have occurred globally. Of the total cases and deaths reported since the beginning of the outbreak, 3,878,945 cases and 87,271 deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-26.
- Generally, the United States of America (USA) reported the highest number of cases followed by India.
- The highest numbers of new cases in the last seven days were reported from Brazil (606,770 new cases), India (430,648 new cases), the United States of America (336,265 new cases), Colombia (225,722 new cases) and Russian Federation (209,407 new cases).
- In Africa, as of July 04, 2021, a total of 5,705,325 cases and 145,003 deaths were reported across the continent (CFR=2.54%). Of these 323,767 cases and 5,881 deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-26.
- In Africa, South Africa reported the highest number of cases followed by Morocco.
- Ethiopia reported the highest number of COVID-19 confirmed cases in East Africa. See the summary dashboard below.

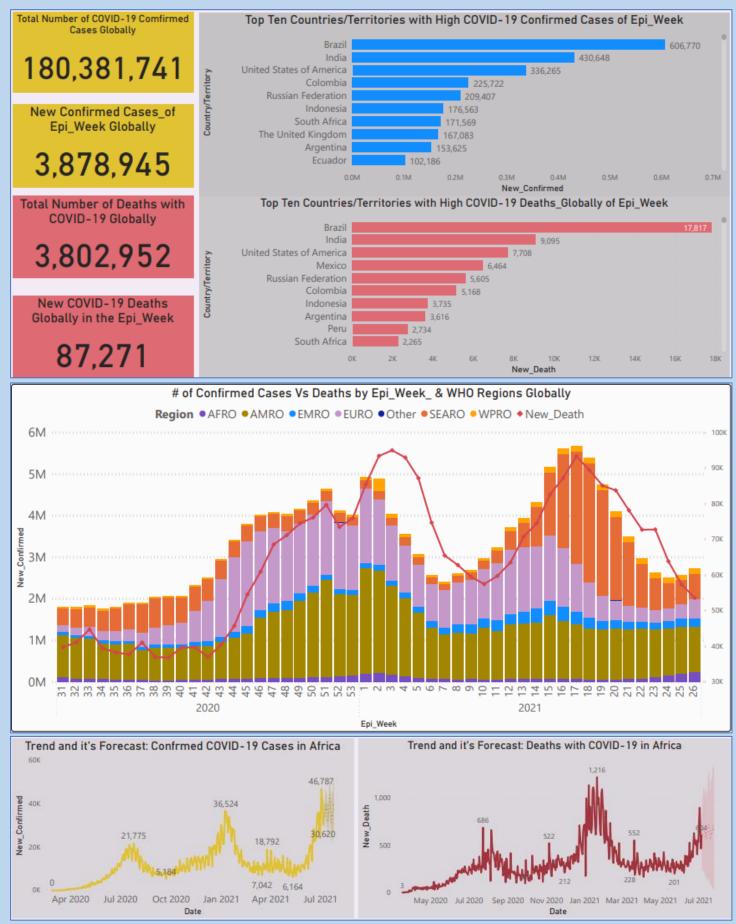
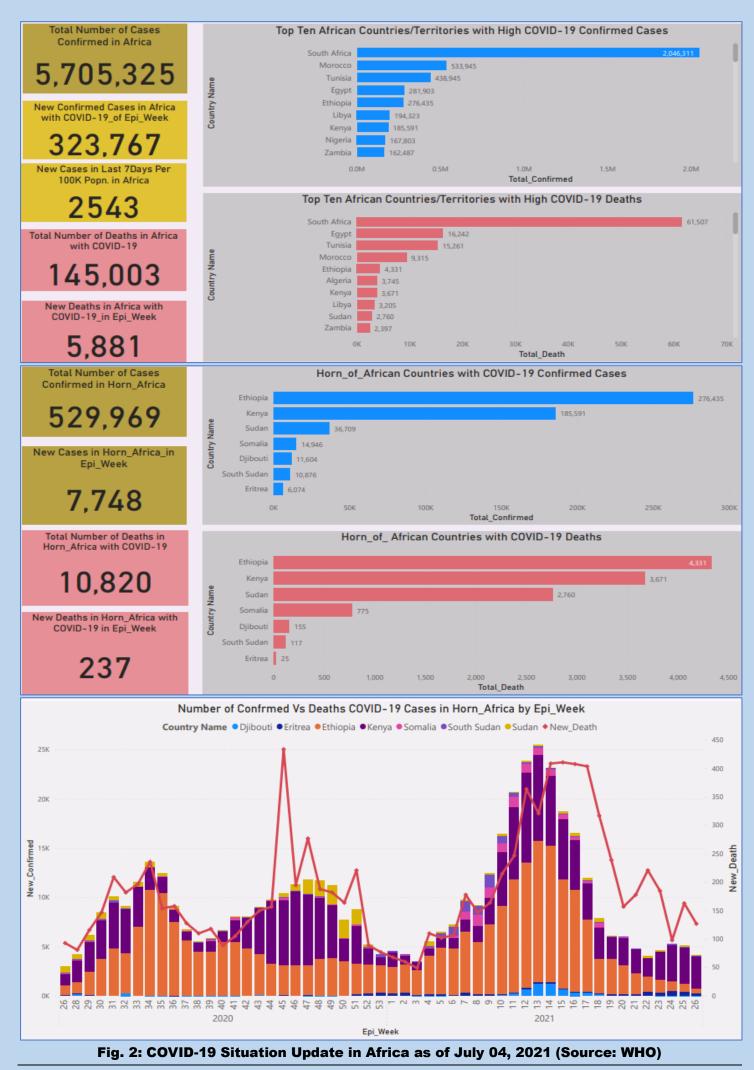


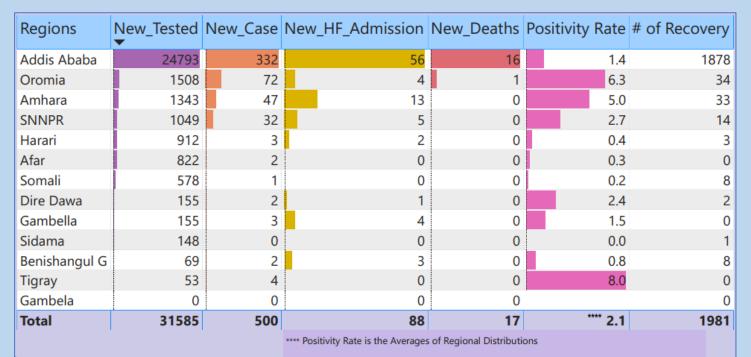
Fig. 1: COVID-19 Global Situation Update as of July 04, 2021 (Source: WHO)



b. National COVID-19 situation:

- As of July 04, 2021, a total of 276,435 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 4,331 deaths were recorded in the country with a case fatality rate of 1.57%. This puts Ethiopia in the fifth position by the number of confirmed cases and by the number of deaths due to COVID-19 in Africa.
- Five-hundred (500) newly confirmed COVID-19 cases and 17 COVID-19 related deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-26.
- In this week, there is a 33% decrease in the number of COVID-19 confirmed cases (for the 13th consecutive week) and there is a 45% decrease in the number of deaths due to COVID-19 (for the 2nd consecutive week).
- For detail, see the summary dashboard below.

Table 1: Summary of National COVID-19 situation in the Epi-Week-26 of 2021



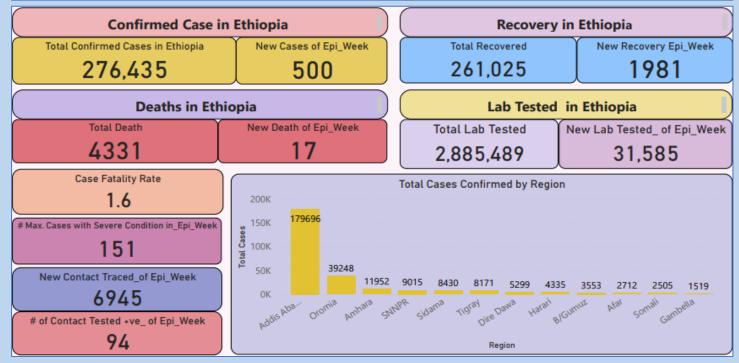
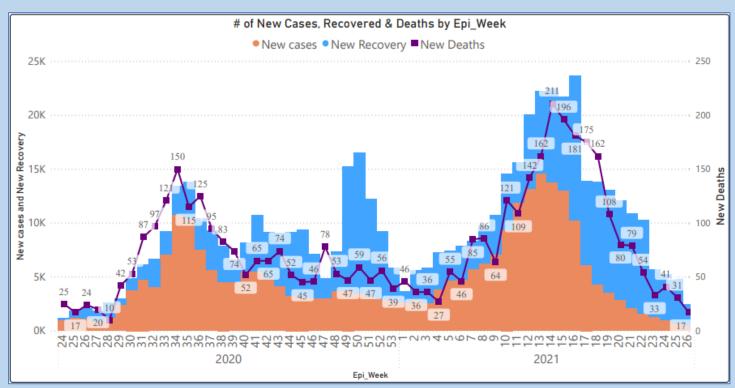
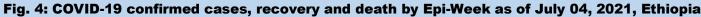


Fig. 3: Weekly summary of the COVID-19 situation in Ethiopia as of July 04, 2021, Ethiopia





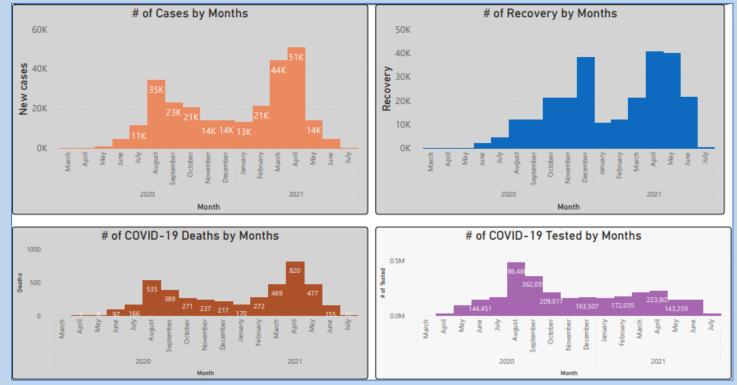


Fig. 5: Summary of monthly trend of COVID-19 situation in Ethiopia as of July 04, 2021.

c. Other Epi-Surveillance Related Activities

There is ongoing travelers' health screening at point of entries (POEs), follow-up of international travelers, rumor collection, verification, investigation and information provision via toll free call center, active case detection by house to house search, contact listing, tracing and follow-up of persons who had contact with confirmed cases. There is also laboratory investigation of suspected cases, contacts of confirmed cases, SARI/pneumonia cases and community members, surveillance and assessment in school and congregated setting communities.

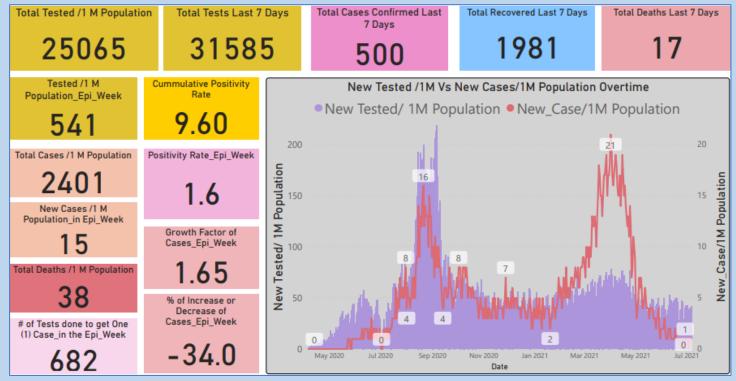


Fig. 6: Summary of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Ethiopia as of July 04, 2021.

i. Contact tracing and follow-up:

- Contact tracing is a key strategy for interrupting chains of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and reducing COVID-19-associated mortality.
- As of July 04, 2021:
 - A total of 373,485 contacts of confirmed cases have been identified. Of these, 6945 contacts were identified in the Epi-Week-26.
 - Of total contacts, 328,356 (87.91%) have completed 14 days follow-up, while 3,422 contacts are still on follow-up.
- Overall, 42,142 (11.28%) of the contacts (symptomatic plus asymptomatic) have been tested positive.
- Contacts of the confirmed cases contributed for the 15.30% of the total cases.

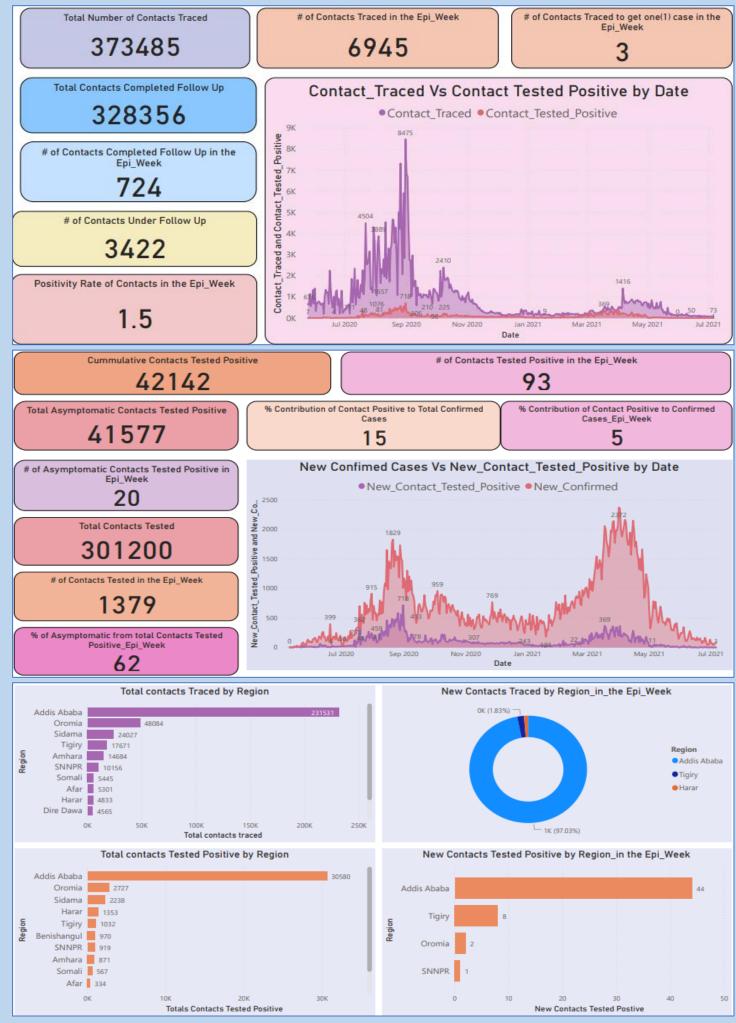


Fig. 7: Summary of COVID-19 contact tracing as of July 04, 2021, Ethiopia.

ii. Rumors collection and verification from all sources

- COVID-19 related rumors are received from different sources: Call centers, Health facilities, Contact follow up, Self-report, Travelers follow up, Point of Entry (PoE), Community surveillance and Special Settings.
- As of July 04, 2021:
 - 392,770 rumors/alerts have been received and investigated. Of these, 8 rumors were reported in the Epi-Week-26.
 - o 279,089 (71.06%) of the rumors/alerts have fulfilled the suspected case definition.
- 17,152 COVID-19 related calls are received through call centers in this Epi-week.

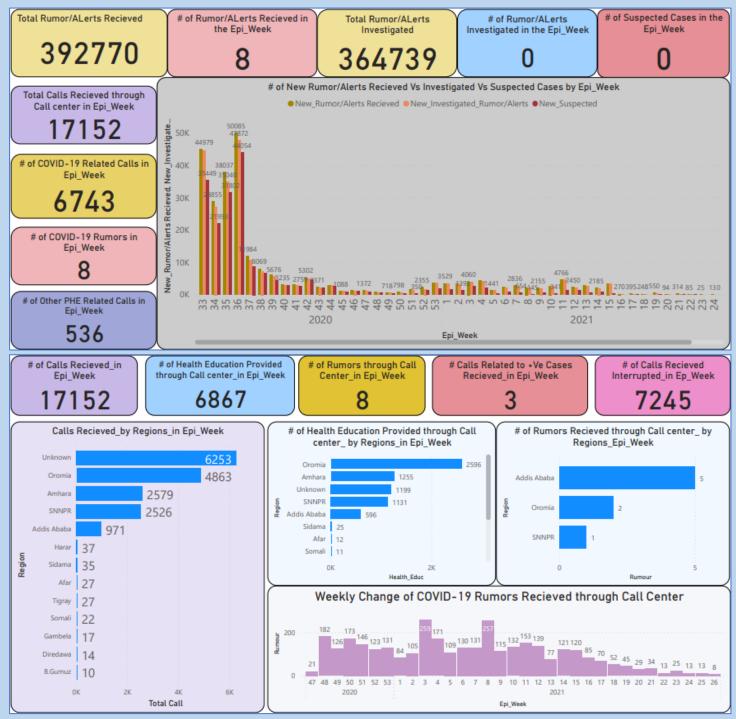


Fig. 8: Summary of COVID-19 rumor/alert investigation as of July 04, 2021, Ethiopia.

iii. Point of entry and Quarantine related activities

- Since the start of the outbreak, 2,372,222 passengers have been screened at the Point of Entries of Ethiopia and 743,717 (32%) of them were screened at Bole International Airport.
- Of the total passengers screened, 28,957 were screened for COVID-19 in the Epi-Week-26.
- As of July 04, 2021, among the passengers coming with COVID-19 PCR test result certificates 51 (one in Epi-week-26) passengers with PCR positive certificates were identified during health screening. A total of 91 SARS-COV-2 positive cases have been detected after arrival laboratory test.

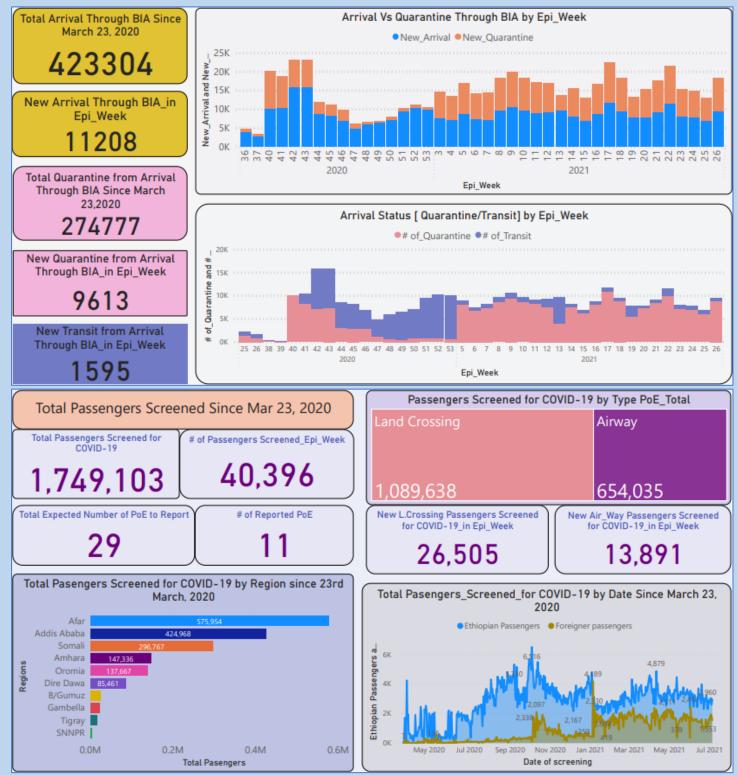


Fig. 9: Summary of Passengers screening for COVID-19 as of July 04, 2021, Ethiopia.

IV. Laboratory related activities

- As of 04 July 2021, a total of 2,885,489 samples have been tested for COVID-19 by laboratories across the country.
- 31,585 laboratory tests were processed during the Epi-Week-26 which is a 9% increase compared to number of tests performed in the previous week.
- The laboratory test positivity rate for the Epi-Week-26 is 1.58%, which is lower than that of the preceding week (2.56%).
- Tigray region, Oromia region, Amhara region, SNNPR and Dire Dawa city administration have reported
 positivity rates higher than the national weighted average while the positivity rate in Addis Ababa has showed
 a decrease (figure 11 below). This shows that the COVID-19 epidemic has got high spread to regions. The
 high positivity rate recorded in Tigray regional state may be defined by the interrupted COVID-19 response
 activities during the political unrest in the last six months.
- COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Diagnostic Test (Ag-RDT) is also being performed nationally. Among the total COVID-19 laboratory tests performed in Ethiopia, a total of 28,987 laboratory tests are performed by Ag-RDT among which 4,572 is performed in the Epi-week-26 (figure 10 below).
 - There are around 1.5 million Ag-RDT kits (distributed to testing sites and available at central store at EPSA).
 - All the available Ag-RDT kits will be expired by January 31, 2022. In order to utilize the available Ag-RDT kits before their expiry date, more than 7000 samples (average) must be performed by the kits per day.

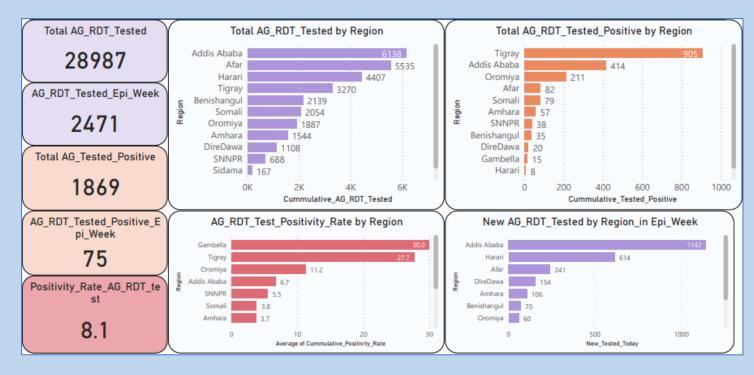
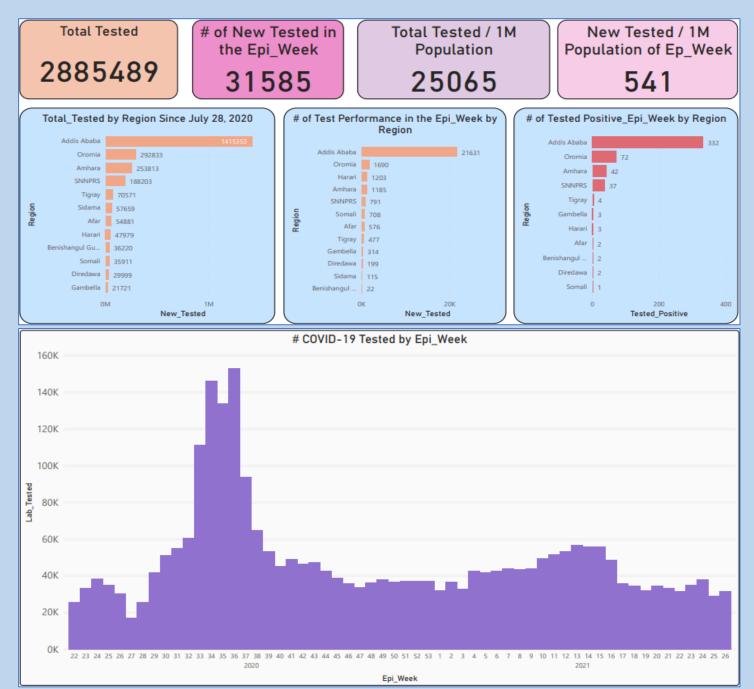


Fig. 10: Update on laboratory tests performed by Ag-RDT, as of July 04, 2021



Region/City Admn New_Tested Tested_Positive New_Deaths Positivity_Rate

<u> </u>	▼			-
Addis Ababa	24793	332	15	1.3
Oromia	1508	72	1	6.3
Amhara	1343	42	1	4.5
SNNPRS	1049	37	0	3.6
Harari	912	3	0	0.3
Afar	822	2	0	0.2
Somali	578	1	0	0.1
Diredawa	155	2	0	2.4
Gambella	155	3	0	1.4
Sidama	148	0	0	0.0
Benishangul Gumuz	69	2	0	0.9
Tigray	53	4	0	7.5
Total	31585	500	17	2.1

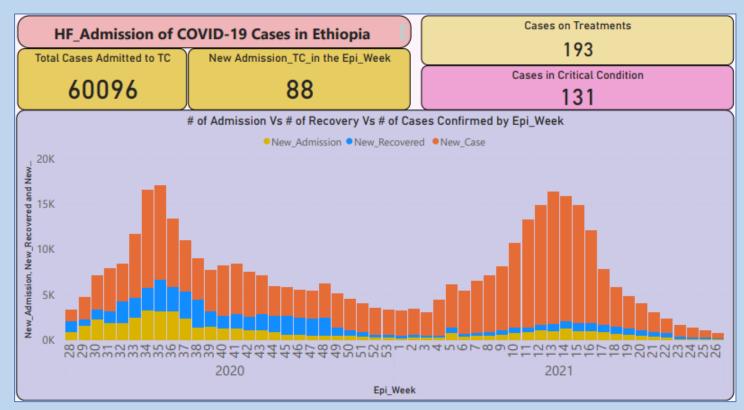
****** Positivity Rate is average of Regional Distn of Rates

Fig. 11: Summary of COVID-19 laboratory testing as of March July 04, 2021, Ethiopia.

V. Case Management and Facility Readiness

a. COVID-19 treatment center

- There were total of 1,981 newly recovered COVID-19 cases during the Epi-Week-26, bringing the total number of recovered cases to 261,025 (both from COVID-19 treatment center and from HBIC). This brings the overall recovery rate to 94%.
- The highest number of daily cases in severe condition reported in this week is 151.



HF=Health Facilities TC=Treatment Center

Fig. 12: Summary of COVID-19 cases in Health Facilities/Treatment centers, as of July 04, 2021.

Table 2: Summary of COVID-19 cases at treatment centers as of July 04, 2021

Regions	Total_Case ▼	New_Case	Total_Admission	New_Admission	Total_Death	Total_Recovered	On_Treatment	Critical_Case
Addis Ababa	179696	46	29674	3	2271	26354	94	83
Oromia	39248	11	7275	0	507	6715	44	13
Amhara	11952	9	4534	0	260	4250	20	13
SNNPR	9015	1	4389	0	151	4274	4	0
Sidama	8430	0	3432	0	158	3209	6	4
Tigray	8171	0	5290	0	59	5206	16	14
Dire Dawa	5299	0	1181	0	67	1111	1	0
Harari	4335	0	1276	0	150	1119	3	3
Benishangul G	3553	0	878	0	19	854	1	0
Afar	2712	0	826	0	5	812	0	0
Somali	2505	0	659	0	55	598	3	0
Gambella	1519	0	682	0	8	649	1	1

b. Home Based Isolation and Care (HBIC):

- So far, 206,326 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been on HBIC. Of them 205,974 (99.83%) have recovered and 33 (0.016%) died.
- Of these, 309 cases have been enrolled to HBIC and 1,917 cases have recovered and one case died in the Epi-Week-26.
- As of July 04, 2021, there are 1,605 cases on HBIC.
- So far, 2,184 of the cases have been transferred from treatment centers to HBIC after improvement.
- So far, 898 (one of them in the Epi-week-26) of the cases have been transferred from HBIC to treatment centers for better care.

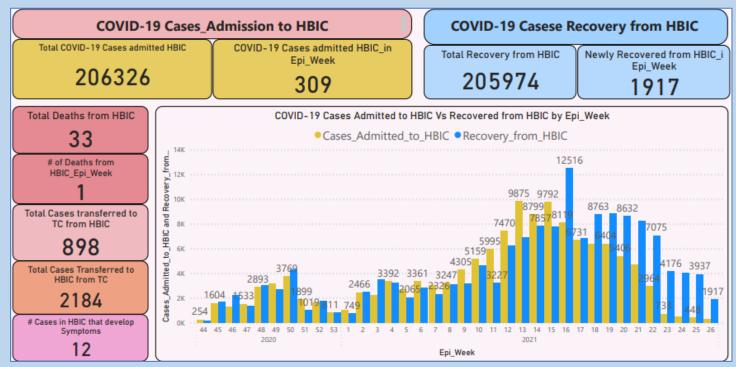


Fig. 13: Summary of COVID-19 Home Based Isolation and Care in Ethiopia, as of July 04, 2021.

VI. Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

- Media (mass media and social media) monitoring on COVID-19 related information is ongoing.
- Strengthening RCCE Technical Working Group coordination and plan alignment conducted with World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF), Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs (JHUCCP).
- Action points and strategy has been being developed to engage selected Minister offices in the 'I have a stake' campaign
- Strategic review zoom meeting conducted with regional RCCE pillar and the strategic leadership directions cascaded to regional teams to give focus and keep prepared the emergence of new variant wave

- Community engagement and ownership orientation provided for more than 200 community representatives of Dire Dawa, and 63 media workers of Oromia to advocate vigilant society of COVID-19 prevention



Fig. 14: Interview and panel discussion on EBC regarding current COVID-19 situation in Ethiopia.

COVID-19 related key messages and updates shared on social media.

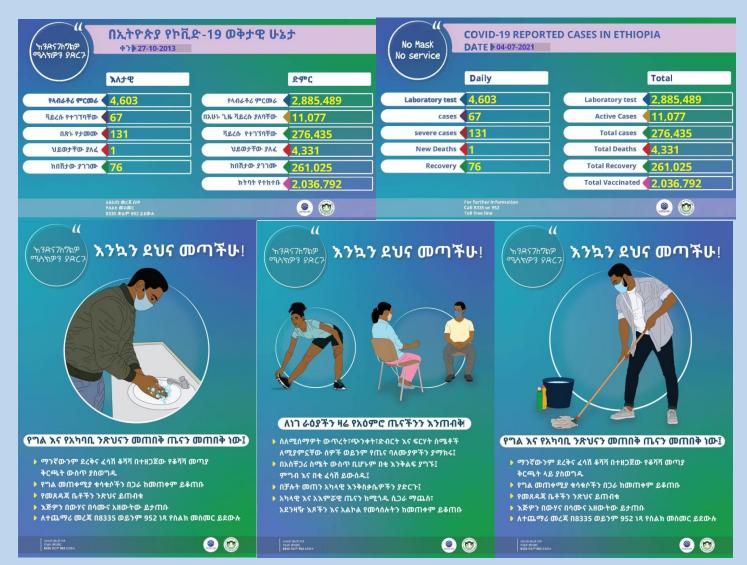


Fig. 15: COVID-19 related key messages and situation update as of July 04, 2021 shared on social media.

VII. Coordination and Leadership

- The national PHEOC is collaboratively working with stakeholders: government agencies, partner organizations, UN agencies, embassies, hospitals, Industrial parks and others.
- Morning briefing of IMS is being conducted every day by core IMS staffs and key partners' representatives.
- Weekly leadership strategic virtual meeting, chaired by the H.E MOH Minster, is being conducted to oversee and guide the response efforts.
- Weekly joint meeting is ongoing, every Tuesday, among the national and regional Emergency Operations Centers COVID-19 response IMS (incident management system) to evaluate weekly COVID-19 situations, progress of response strategies, challenges faced and way forwards.
- The weekly virtual meeting of Joint Steering Committee encompassing MOH, Agencies and RHB top leadership under the leadership of H.E Minister of Health is ongoing.

VIII. Challenges and Way Forward

a. Challenges

- Poor adherence to the public health and social measures by public figures, leaders and community in general.
- Poor attention given to COVID-19 at all levels by all responsible bodies.
- Weak law enforcement efforts to enhance adherence to COVID-19 prevention and control measures.
- Lack of full information on circulating variant
- Low stock status of personal protective equipment and laboratory supplies.
- COVID-19 vaccine shortage due to global vaccine stock shortage
- COVID-19 vaccine related misinformation and hesitancy.
- Very low performance of the revitalization plan
- Very low utilization of Antigen-Rapid Diagnostic Test kits by facilities despite its distribution to all regions and capacity building activities.

b. Way Forward

- Enhancing law enforcement to enhance public health and social measures by all responsible bodies.
- Continuing the COVID-19 vaccination.
- Genomic surveillance establishment, networking and strengthening.
- Intensifying risk communication and community engagement activities.
- Strengthening collaboration and coordination with key stakeholders and partners.

- Advocating and strengthening Home Based Isolation and Care (HBIC).
- Conducting intensive testing of high-risk population group and contacts of confirmed cases for COVID-19.
- Enhancing technical support, coordination and timely and accurate information sharing at all levels.
- Enhancing active surveillance for COVID-19 such as house-to-house case search and detection in the community.
- Intensification of a capacity building trainings and orientation including through virtual/online platforms.
- Strengthening and sustaining other essential health services besides COVID-19.
- Enhancing performance and follow up on Antigen Rapid Diagnostic Test Kits from regional COVID-19 testing sites.
- Conduct '*I have a stake*' Initiatives at selected sector offices and launch the theme '*I have a stake to prevent further impacts and spread of new variants*' in each sectors based on organizational structure and culture.

IX. Public Health Policy Recommendation

Advice for the Public:

- For any individual confirmed to have COVID-19 and who is candidate for Home Based Isolation and Care:
 - Properly isolate from other family members.
 - o Take full responsibility in prevention of transmission
 - Strictly adhere to the National Directive of Home-Based Isolation & Care.
 - Provide reliable information during regular follow up either by phone or home visit.
 - Report to nearest health facilities/follow up team in case of any emergency, appearance of new symptoms or worsening of existing symptoms.
- It is important to be informed of the situation and act appropriately to protect yourself and your family.
 - Wash hands frequently;
 - Don't touch your mouth, nose or eye by unwashed hands;
 - Keep physical distancing; avoid mass gathering and shaking hands;
 - Get vaccinated against COVID-19.
- For most people, COVID-19 infection will cause mild illness however, it can make some people very ill and, in some people, it can be fatal.
- Older people, and those with pre-existing medical conditions (such as cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease or diabetes) are at risk for severe disease.
- If anybody had contact with a COVID-19 confirmed patient, he/she should call 8335 or 952 or report to regional toll-free lines or to the nearby health facilities.

National/Regional official websites, social media pages and toll-free hotline for COVID-19 information

MOH/EPHI/Region	Facebook page	Toll-free hotline	Email address (PHEOCs email)
Ethiopian Public Health Institute Main Website	https://www.ephi.gov.et/	8335/952	ephieoc@gmail.com
Ethiopian Public Health Institute COVID-19 Website	https://covid19.ephi.gov.et/		
Ethiopian Public Health Institute Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/ephipa ge/		
Ethiopian Public Health Institute Twitter Page	https://twitter.com/EPHIEthiopia		
Ethiopian Public Health	https://t.me/EthPHI		
Institute Telegram Channel Ethiopian Public Health	https://www.youtube.com/channel/		
Institute YouTube Channel Ministry of Health, Ethiopia	UCvvTzeY-IJiQfEFBULH9Mkw www.moh.gov.et	952	
Website Ministry of Health, Ethiopia	https://www.facebook.com/Ethiopi		
Facebook Page	aFMoH/	0000	
Afar Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/afarrhb .org/	6220	afarpheoc@gmail.com
Amhara Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/Amhar a-Healthbureau- 682065755146948/	6981	aphieoc@gmail.com
Benishangul Gumuz Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/Benish angul-Gumuz-Health-Bureau- 1676282159265517/	6016	bgpheoc@gmail.com
Gambela Regional Health Bureau	https://fb.me/gambellaregionhealth bureau	6184	gambellapheoc@gmail.com
Harari Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/Harari- Regional-Health-Bureau- 1464182130355007/	6864	hrhbpheoc@gmail.com
Oromia Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/Oromia Health/	6955	oromiapheoc@gmail.com
Somali Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/srhbdot com/	6599	somalipheoc@gmail.com
SNNP Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/snnprh ealthbureau/?ref=br_rs	6929	snnppheoc@gmail.com
Tigray Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/tigrayrh b/	6244	tigraypheoc@gmail.com
Sidama PHEM			sidamapheoc@gmail.com
Dire Dawa city Administration Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/Dire- Dawa-Administration-Health- Bureau-1371606266279524/	6407	ddpheoc@gmail.com
Addis Ababa City Administration Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/aahb.g ov.et/	6406	aapheoc@gmail.com

COVID-19 updates and sources of evidence:

Source	Link
WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) dashboard	https://covid19.who.int/
Africa CDC Dashboard, COVID-19	https://au.int/en/covid19
Surveillance Dashboard	
WHO COVID-19 daily situation reports	https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-
	coronavirus-2019/situation-reports
WHO Academy mobile learning app for health	Android-
workers, COVID-19 information	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.who.WH
	OA Apple- https://apps.apple.com/us/app/who-
	academy/id1506019873





The above presented Quick Reader (QR) code takes you to a portal that you can access updates and all COVID-19 related information available (https://covid19.ephi.gov.et/covid-19/)

DISCLAIMER

This weekly bulletin is produced based on figures pulled from official releases of the World Health Organization and activities and reports of all the sections under the Incident management System.

This Weekly Bulletin series of publications is published by the Ethiopian public health Institute (EPHI), public health emergency operation center (PHEOC). The aim of this bulletin is to inform decision makers within the institute and FMOH, UN agencies and NGOs about COVID-19 preparedness and response activities. All interested health and other professionals can get this bulletin at the Institute website; <u>www.ephi.gov.et</u>

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