



Address: Telephone: +251-112-765-340, Toll free: 8335, Fax: +251-112-758-634, Website: www.ephi.gov.et, P.O. Box 1242, Swaziland Street, Addis Ababa

# NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTER (PHEOC), ETHIOPIA

COVID-19 PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN ETHIOPIA

# **WEEKLY BULLETIN**

**Epi-Week- 34 (August 23 – 29, 2021)** 

BULLETIN Nº: 70

#### I. HIGHLIGHTS

- A total of 61,062 laboratory samples were tested in the Epi-Week-34 bringing the total number of samples tested to 3,225,641.
- A total of 10,313 new confirmed COVID-19 cases and 83 COVID-19 related deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-34 bringing the total cases and death to 306,117 and 4,644 respectively.
- On August 29, 2021, there are 602 cases in severe condition which is higher than the maximum number of daily cases in severe condition in the previous week (484).
- A total of 226,391 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been managed at Home Based Isolation and Care so far; 6,912 of these were enrolled in the Epi-Week-34.
- The number of COVID-19 cases, critical cases and the number of positive samples among the tested samples have shown increment in this week.
- China has donated 300,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses to Ethiopia.

# **II. Subjects in Focus:**

# a) Vaccination against COVID-19 in Ethiopia

• In Ethiopia, a total of 2,435,730 doses of COVID-19 vaccine (either AstraZeneca, Sinopharm or Johnson and Johnson) are administered so far. Among the vaccinated individuals 397,834 (16%) people are fully vaccinated.

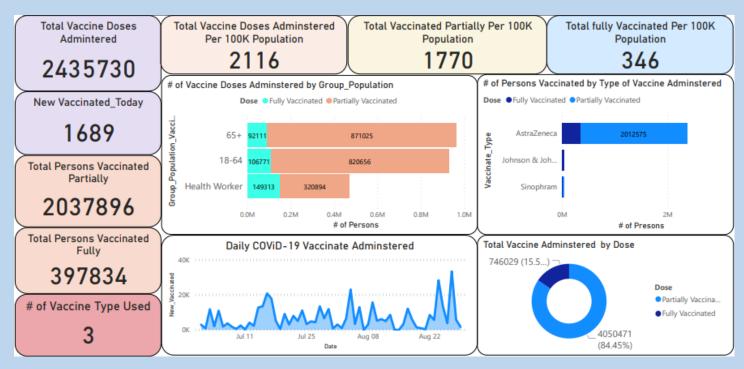


Figure 1: Summary of vaccination against COVID-19 in Ethiopia as of August 29, 2021

### b) SARS-COV-2 new variants

- The new variants of SARS-COV-2 (Variants of Concern and Variants of Interest) are being detected in new
  countries and territories. Below are the incidence of the four variants of concern detected in various countries
  as of August 29, 2021.
  - Globally, cases of the Alpha variant have been reported in 193 (one new) country, territories or areas, while 141 countries (no new country) reported cases of the Beta variant; 91 countries (five new countries) reported cases of the Gamma variant; 170 countries (seven new countries) reported cases of the Delta variant.
- Among the SARS-COV-2 Variants of Concern Alpha and Beta variants were detected in Ethiopia by the
  genomic sequencing conducted so far in Ethiopia and at Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI). The
  report regarding the new variants is already disclosed on July 13, 2021. Activities regarding genomic
  sequencing for other new variants, like Delta variant, are under way in Ethiopia.

#### III. EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SITUATION

#### a. Global Situation

- With just under 5.8 million new cases reported this week (23-29 August), the number of new cases reported globally remains similar to the previous week after having increased for nearly two months (Figure 2).
- The number of deaths reported globally this week was also similar to last week, with nearly 99,000 new deaths reported.
- As of August 29, 2021, a total of 209,673,108 COVID-19 cases and 4,280,687 deaths (CFR=2.04%) have occurred globally. Of the total cases and deaths reported since the beginning of the outbreak, 5,780,816 cases and 98,906 deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-34.
- 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 the United States of America (1,085,941 new cases), India (726,054 new cases), Brazil (432,617 new cases), the Islamic Republic of Iran (270,475 new cases) and the United Kingdom (244,713 new cases).
- In Africa, as of August 29, 2021, a total of 7,668,446 cases and 191,022 deaths were reported across the continent (CFR=2.50%). Of these 298,534 cases (1% decrease compared to previous week) and 8,161 deaths (9% decrease compared to previous week) were reported during the Epi-Week-34.
- 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.

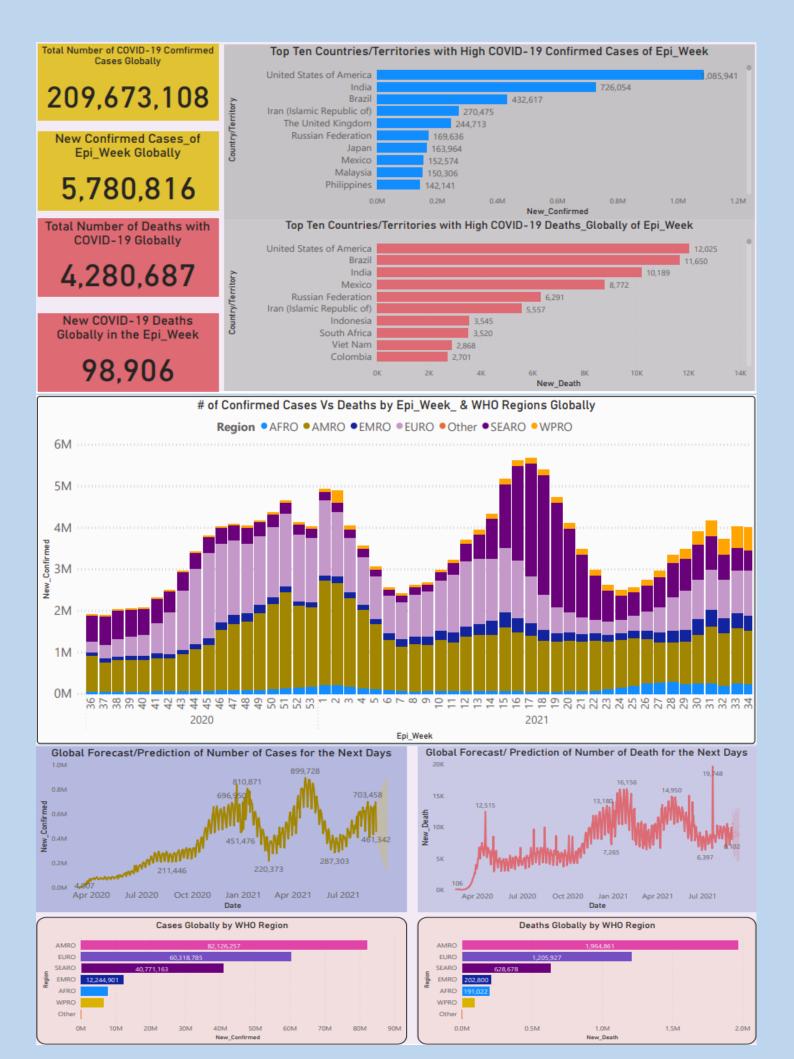


Figure 2: COVID-19 Global Situation Update as of August 29, 2021 (Source: WHO)

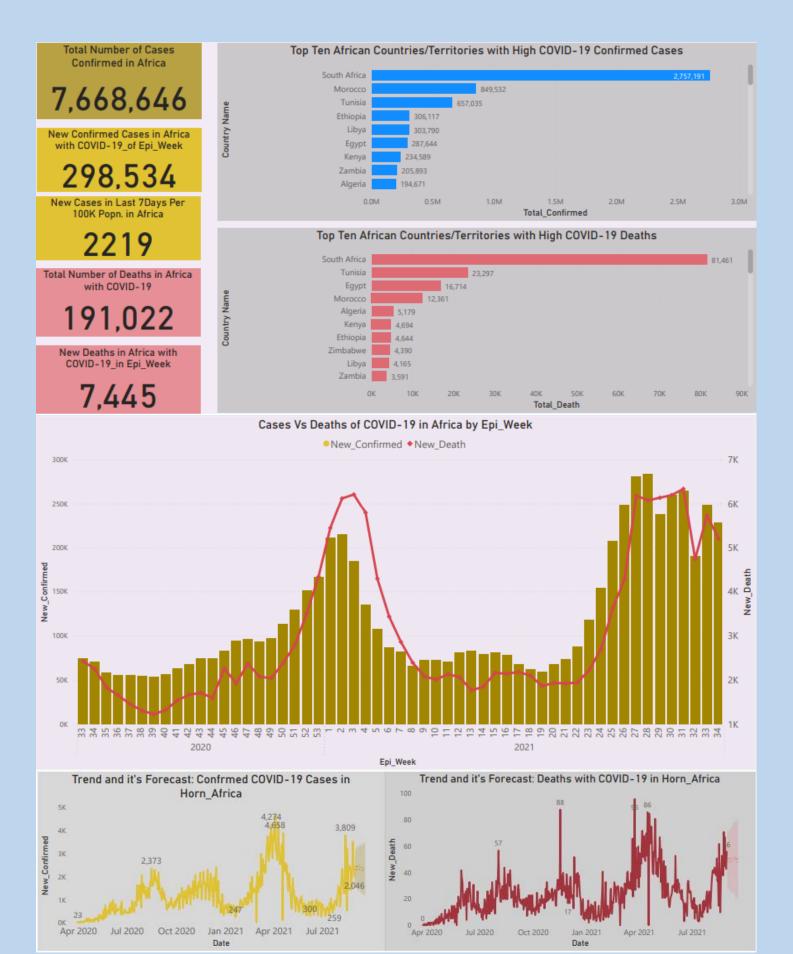


Figure 3: COVID-19 Situation Update in Africa as of August 29, 2021 (Source: WHO)

#### **b. National COVID-19 situation:**

- As of August 29, 2021, a total of 306,117 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 4,644 deaths were recorded in the
  country with a case fatality rate of 1.52%. This puts Ethiopia in the fourth position by the number of confirmed
  cases and in the seventh position by the number of deaths due to COVID-19 in Africa.
- Ten-thousand-three-hundred-thirteen (10,313) newly confirmed COVID-19 cases and 83 COVID-19 related deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-34.
- In this week, there is 58% increase in the number of COVID-19 confirmed cases and the increase in the number of deaths due to COVID-19 is equivalent to in the previous week.
- For detail, see the summary dashboard below.

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

Table 1: Summary of National COVID-19 situation in the Epi-Week-34 of 2021

Regions	New_Tested	New_Case	New_HF_Admission	New_Deaths	Positivity Rate	# of Recovery
Addis Ababa	50992	9282	500	64	18.0	4570
Oromia	5471	592	66	11	11.3	114
SNNPR	1901	152	23	1	8.4	42
Afar	647	4	0	0	0.6	15
Dire Dawa	612	41	7	1	9.2	30
Sidama	564	125	12	1	22.7	29
Amhara	480	73	25	4	18.3	623
Harari	307	31	6	0	9.0	15
Somali	274	6	1	0	2.2	7
Gambella	210	4	0	0	3.5	0
Benishangul G	83	2	1	0	7.5	0
Benishangul	45	1	1	1	2.0	0
Tigray	0	0	0	0		0
Total	61586	10313	642	83	10.5	5445
			**** Positivity Rate is the Averages	of Regional Distribution	ons	

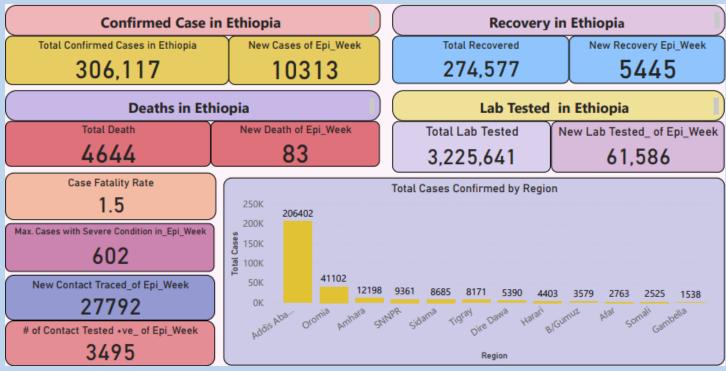


Figure 4: Weekly summary of the COVID-19 situation in Ethiopia as of August 29, 2021, Ethiopia

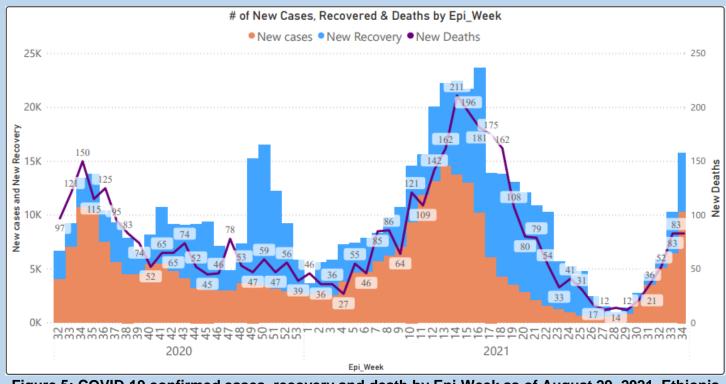


Figure 5: COVID-19 confirmed cases, recovery and death by Epi-Week as of August 29, 2021, Ethiopia

# 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.

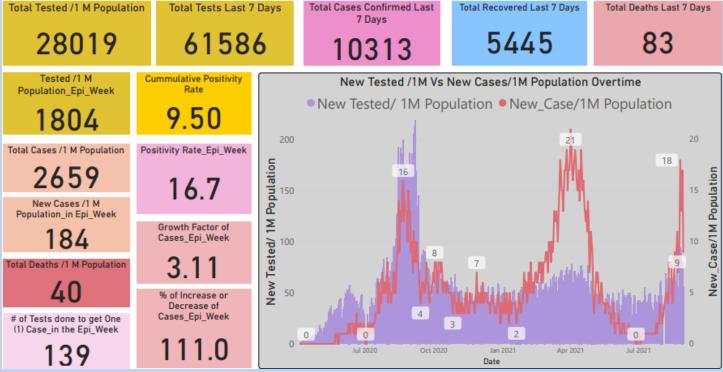


Figure 6: Summary of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Ethiopia as of August 29, 2021.

#### 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 and thus should be enhanced.
- As of August 29, 2021:
  - A total of 399,891 contacts of confirmed cases have been identified. Of these, 18,151 contacts were identified in the Epi-Week-34.
  - o Of total contacts, 338,707 (84.69%) have completed follow-up, while 2,943 contacts are still on follow-up.
  - All the contacts traced are from Addis Ababa city administration and SNNPR; no contact tracing activity is reported from other regions.
- Overall, 44,185 (11.04%) of the contacts (symptomatic plus asymptomatic) have been tested positive.
- Contacts of the confirmed cases contributed for the 14.43% of the total cases. However, when there is transmission of the disease at community level, it is known that an individual acquires the disease from unknown/unidentified contacts.

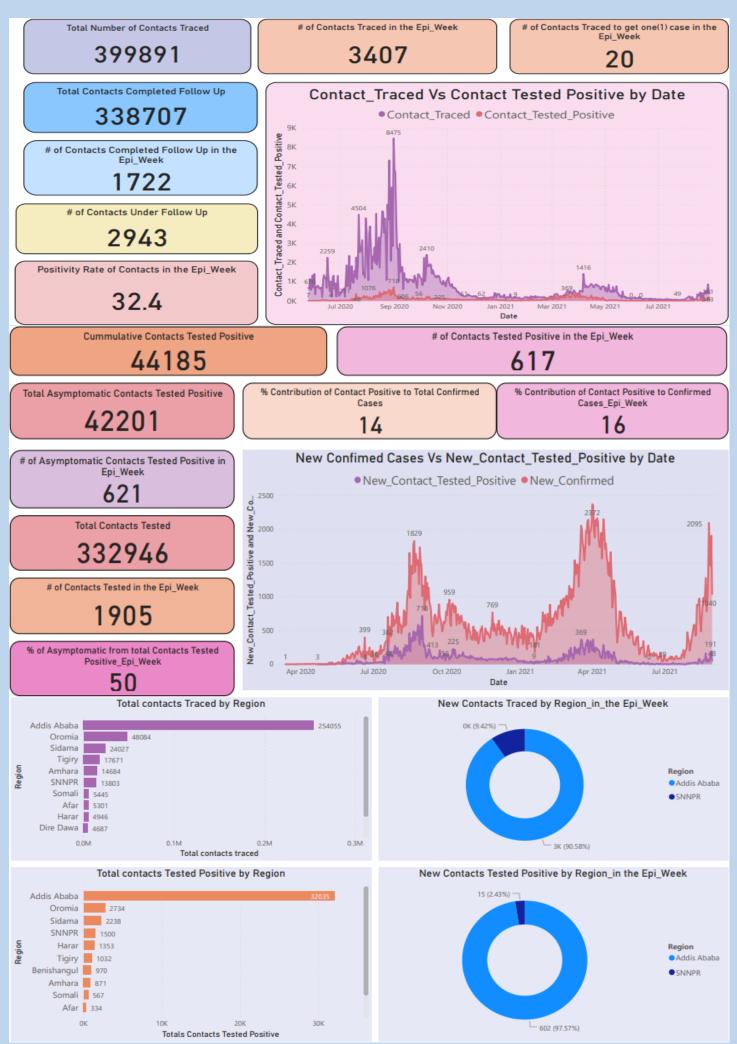


Figure 7: Summary of COVID-19 contact tracing as of August 29, 2021, Ethiopia.

#### 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 August 29, 2021:
  - 392,914 rumors/alerts have been received and investigated. Of these, 24 rumors were reported in the Epi-Week-34.
  - o 279,089 (71.03%) of the rumors/alerts have fulfilled the suspected case definition.
- 97,292 COVID-19 related calls are received through call centers in this Epi-week.

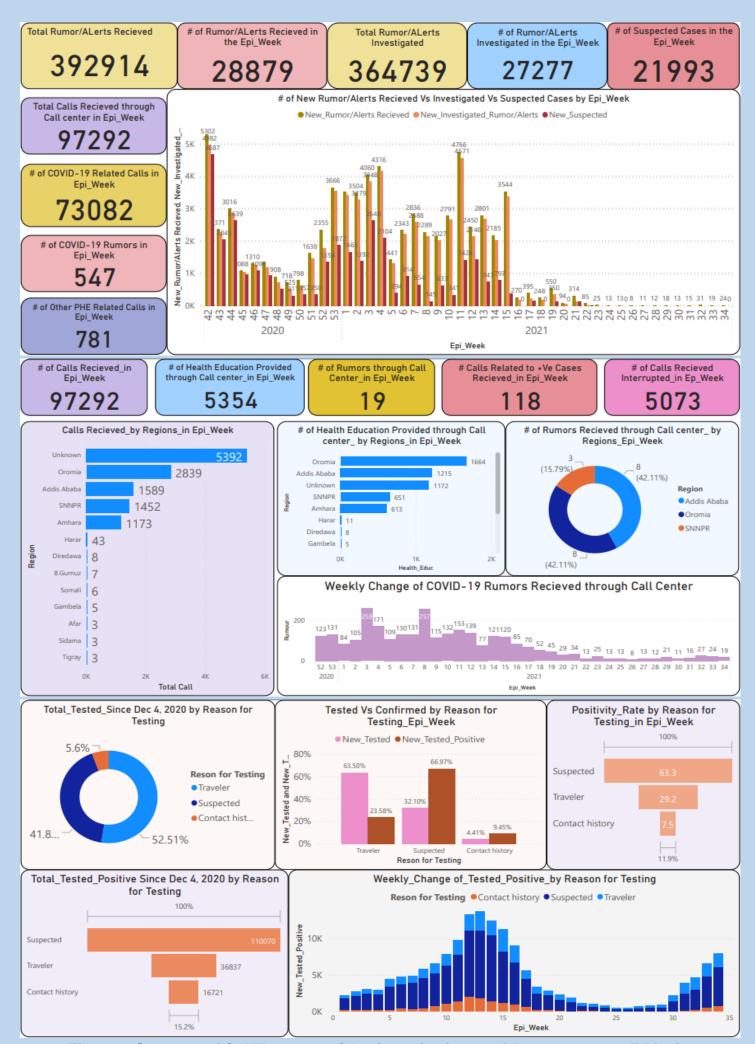


Figure 8: Summary of COVID-19 rumor/alert investigation as of August 29, 2021, Ethiopia.

#### iii. Point of entry and Quarantine related activities

- Since the start of the outbreak, 2,600,656 passengers have been screened at the Point of Entries of Ethiopia and 799,948 (31%) of them were screened at Bole International Airport.
- Of the total passengers screened, 27,079 were screened for COVID-19 in the Epi-Week-34.
- As of August 29, 2021, among the passengers coming with COVID-19 PCR test result certificates 51 (none
  in Epi-week-33) passengers with PCR positive certificates were identified during health screening. A total of
  91 SARS-COV-2 positive cases have been detected by RT-PCR after arrival laboratory test.
- Antigen Rapid Diagnostic Test (Ag-RDT) for COVID-19 is also started at Bole International Airport for returnees. The Ag-RDT was started on July 07, 2021. So far, 516 tests are conducted among which 39 positive cases are detected as of August 29, 2021.
- A total of 55,719 returnees were received through Bole International Airport since April 28, 2021. No returnee
  was received in the Epi-week-34. The returnees are admitted to Wosen, Kotebe, Gurdsholla, Megenagna,
  Kirkos, Nifasilk Lafto, Gerji and Entoto returnee centers. All the returnees are discharged and there is no
  returnee currently in returnees' centers as of August 29, 2021.

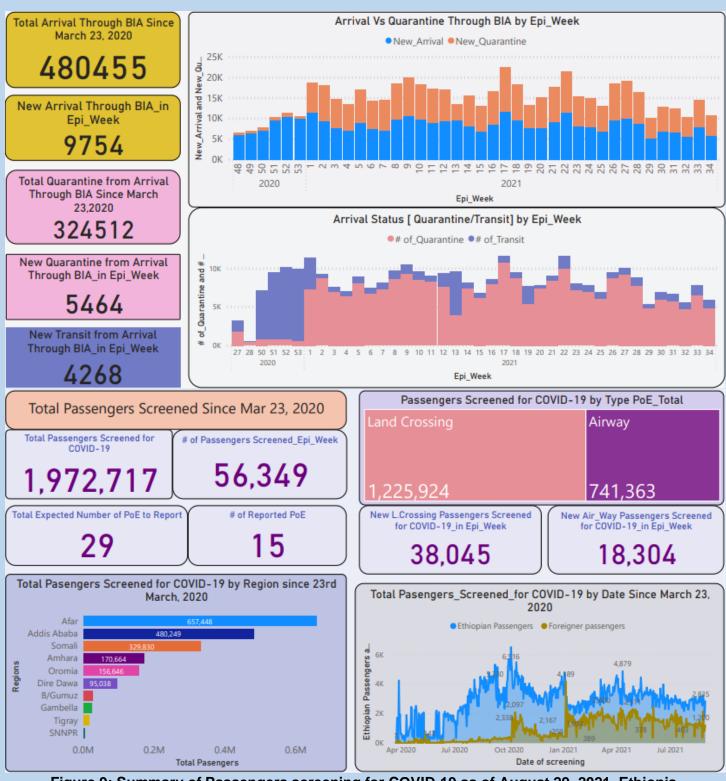


Figure 9: Summary of Passengers screening for COVID-19 as of August 29, 2021, Ethiopia.

# IV. Laboratory related activities

- As of 29 August 2021, a total of 3,164,055 samples have been tested for COVID-19 by laboratories across the country.
- 61,586 laboratory tests were processed during the Epi-Week-34 which is a 25% increase compared to number of tests performed in the previous week. The high number of Rapid Diagnostic Tests done by Ag-RDT may have a great contribution for this increment in the number of laboratory tests.
- The laboratory test positivity rate for the Epi-Week-34 is 16.75%, which is higher than that of the preceding week (13.28%).

- Sidama, Amhara andOromia regional states and Addis Ababa city administration have reported positivity rates higher than the national weighted average (figure 11 below).
- 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 211,566 laboratory tests are performed by Ag-RDT among which 9,638 is performed in the Epi-week-34 (figure 10 below).

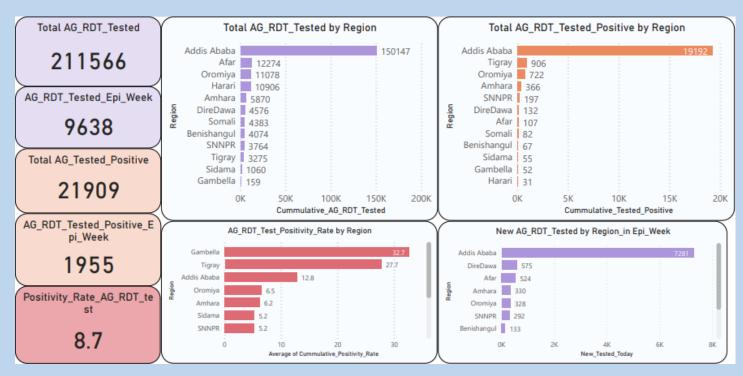


Figure 10: Update on laboratory tests performed by Ag-RDT, as of August 29, 2021

Total Tested 3225641

# of New Tested in the Epi\_Week

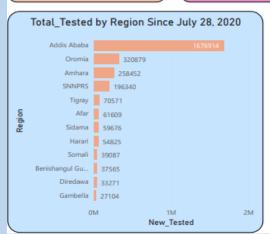
61586

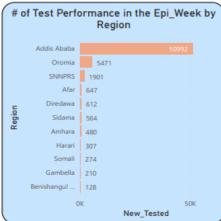
Total Tested / 1M Population

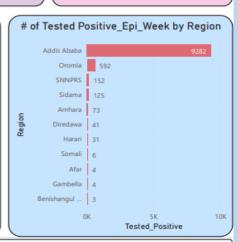
28019

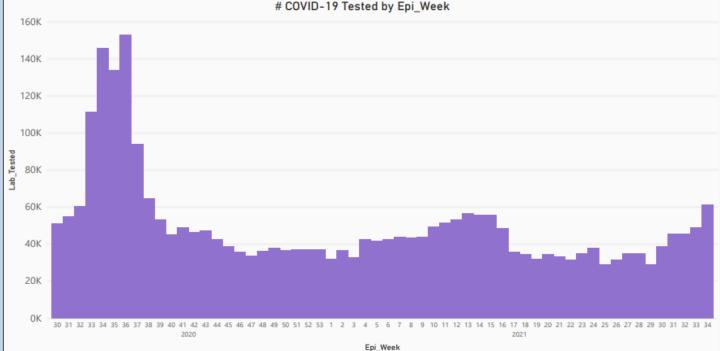
New Tested / 1M Population of Ep\_Week

1804









Region/City Admn	New_Tested	Tested_Positive	New_Deaths	Positivity_R	ate
Addis Ababa	50992	9282	64		18.0
Oromia	5471	592	11		11.2
SNNPRS	1901	152	1		8.4
Afar	647	4	0		0.6
Diredawa	612	41	1		9.2
Sidama	564	125	1		22.7
Amhara	480	73	4		18.2
Harari	307	31	0		9.0
Somali	274	6	0		2.0
Gambella	210	4	0		3.5
Benishangul Gumuz	128	3	1		5.9
Tigray	0	0	0		
Total	61586	10313	83		10.4
		****** Positivity Rate is	average of Regional Distn of	Rates	

Figure 11: Summary of COVID-19 laboratory testing as of March August 29, 2021, Ethiopia.

# V. Case Management and Facility Readiness

#### a. COVID-19 treatment center

- There were total of 5,445 newly recovered COVID-19 cases during the Epi-Week-34, bringing the total number of recovered cases to 269,132 (both from COVID-19 treatment center and from HBIC). This brings the overall recovery rate to 90%.
- The number of cases in severe condition has begun increasing for the last five consecutive weeks. On August 29, 2021, there are 602 cases in severe condition which is higher than the maximum number of daily cases in severe conditions in the previous week (484).

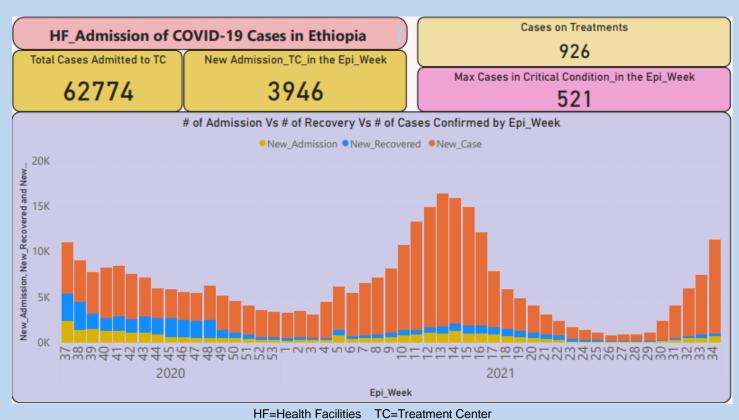


Figure 12: Summary of COVID-19 cases in Health Facilities/Treatment centers, as of August 29, 2021.

Table 2: Summary of COVID-19 cases at treatment centers as of August 29, 2021

Regions	Total_Case ▼	New_Case	Total_Admission	New_Admission	Total_Death	Total_Recovered	On_Treatment	Critical_Case
Addis Ababa	206402	961	31917	64	3683	27457	761	521
Oromia	41102	50	7455	18	535	6848	74	42
Amhara	12198	3	4631	5	267	4322	30	18
SNNPR	9361	9	4453	0	149	4310	27	10
Sidama	8685	9	3471	0	168	3229	17	3
Tigray	8171	0	5290	0	59	5222	0	0
Dire Dawa	5390	7	1196	1	69	1118	7	1
Harari	4403	1	1287	1	164	1123	7	5
Benishangul G	3579	0	901	0	20	876	2	2
Afar	2763	0	826	0	5	812	0	0
Somali	2525	0	665	0	59	603	1	0
Gambella	1538	0	682	0	8	649	0	0

#### b. Home Based Isolation and Care (HBIC):

- So far, 226,391 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been on HBIC. Of them 218,118 (96.35%) have recovered and 37 (0.016%) died.
- Of these, 6,912 cases have been enrolled to HBIC and 4,056 cases have recovered in the Epi-Week-34.
- As of August 29, 2021, there are 9,145 cases on HBIC.
- So far, 1,877 (58 in the Epi-week-34) of the cases have been transferred from treatment centers to HBIC after improvement.
- So far, 966 (7 in the Epi-week-34) of the cases have been transferred from HBIC to treatment centers for better care.

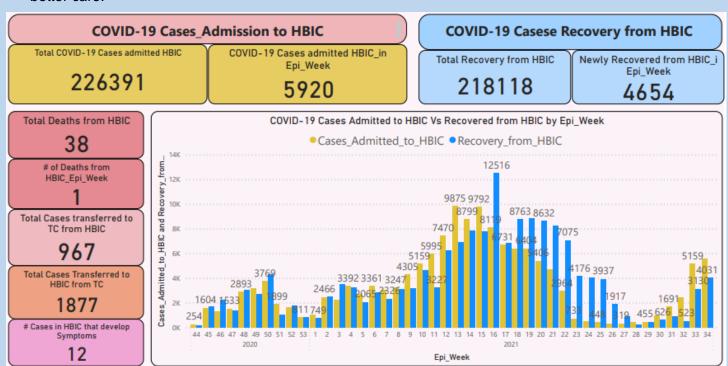


Figure 13: Summary of COVID-19 Home Based Isolation and Care in Ethiopia, as of August 29, 2021.

# VI. Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

- Media (mass media and social media) monitoring on COVID-19 related information is ongoing.
- Press release provided by HE. Dr. Lia Tadesse, Minister of Health, on the current situation of COVID-19 pandemic in Ethiopia, new variants of SARS-COV-2 and the new directive 803/2021.



Figure 14: Press release on COVID-19 situation in Ethiopia, August 24, 2021

- Panel discussions and interviews in national radio and televisions has been conducted regarding current COVID-19 situation and news variants of SARS-COV-2.
- COVID-19 related key messages and updates shared on social media.



Figure 15: COVID-19 situation update as of August 29, 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 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 virtual meeting of Joint Steering Committee encompassing MOH, Agencies and RHB top leadership under the leadership of H.E Minister of Health is ongoing. This meeting was used to be held weekly and it has now decided to be conducted once in two weeks.
- China has donated 300,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses of Sinopharm vaccines to Ethiopia on August 23, 2021. The COVID-19 vaccine doses were received at the Addis Ababa Bole International Airport by Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia Zhao Zhiyuan, HE Dr. Lia Tadesse, Ethiopian Minister of Health and HE Dr. Engineer Getahun Mekuria, Ethiopian Minister of Education. They commended the government of China for the comprehensive anti-COVID-19 support it has provided Ethiopia so far. The Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia Zhao Zhiyuan, disclosed the Asian country has provided about 1 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines to Ethiopia so far underscoring strong commitment to help the East African country's health sector.



Figure 16: COVID-19 vaccines donation from the Government of China to Ethiopia, August 23, 2021

# VIII. Challenges and Way Forward

# a. Challenges

- Increase in COVID-19 cases resulting in Intensive Care Unit beds and Mechanical Ventilators shortage.
- Poor adherence to the public health and social measures by public figures and leaders.
- 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.
- Low stock status of personal protective equipment and laboratory supplies.
- COVID-19 vaccine related misinformation and hesitancy.
- Low utilization of Antigen-Rapid Diagnostic Test kits by facilities despite its distribution to all regions and capacity building activities.

# b. Way Forward

- Orienting the public and stakeholders on <u>directive 803/2013</u>.
- 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.
- 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.
- Enriching the information eco-system online and offline through high-quality health guidance appropriate to the context in four thematic area:
  - Variant of concern and third wave information.
  - Health facility situation and testimony
  - o Identifying and counteracting misinformation on COVID-19 and its vaccine
  - Regular press release on COVID-19 situation by respective officials

# IX. Public Health Policy Recommendation

#### **Advice for the Public:**

- The community should protect themselves from those who try to supply COVID-19 vaccines and other drugs
  illegally and report them to the police when they encounter them. We would like to thank the community and
  the Addis Ababa Police for their involvement in the recent crackdown on the illegal trade in vaccines.
- COVID-19 vaccines should be provided to the public only at public health facilities and free of charge.
   According to the program developed by the Ministry of Health, COVID-19 vaccines are still being given to priority groups at public health institutions at all levels.
- 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
- o Strictly adhere to the National Directive of Home-Based Isolation & Care.
- o 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 Institute Telegram Channel	https://t.me/EthPHI		
Ethiopian Public Health Institute YouTube Channel	https://www.youtube.com/channel/ UCvvTzeY-IJiQfEFBULH9Mkw		
Ministry of Health, Ethiopia Website	www.moh.gov.et	952	
Ministry of Health, Ethiopia Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/EthiopiaFMoH/		
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 Bureau	Regional	Health	https://www.facebook.com/Harari- Regional-Health-Bureau- 1464182130355007/	6864	hrhbpheoc@gmail.com
Oromia Bureau	Regional	Health	https://www.facebook.com/Oromia Health/	6955	oromiapheoc@gmail.com
Somali Bureau	Regional	Health	https://www.facebook.com/srhbdot com/	6599	somalipheoc@gmail.com
SNNP Bureau	Regional	Health	https://www.facebook.com/snnprhealthbureau/?ref=br_rs	6929	snnppheoc@gmail.com
Tigray Bureau	Regional	Health	https://www.facebook.com/tigrayrhb/	6244	tigraypheoc@gmail.com
Sidama I	PHEM				sidamapheoc@gmail.com
Dire Daw Health B	va city Admin ureau	istration	https://www.facebook.com/Dire- Dawa-Administration-Health- Bureau-1371606266279524/	6407	ddpheoc@gmail.com
Addis Administ	Ababa ration Health	City n 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; www.ephi.gov.et

#### **PREPARED BY**

Fantu Lombamo (MD, MPH) - Planning Section, Situation Unit Lead Negusse Yohannes (PhD in Statistics) - Planning Section, Situation Unit Member

#### **REVIEWED BY**

Zewdu Assefa (MPH) – PHE Early Warning and Information System Management P/D/A/Director Ahimed Mohammed (MD, MPH) - Planning Section Chief Mikiyas Teferi (MD) - Deputy Incident Manager, Case Management Section Chief Aschalew Abayneh (RN, BSc, MPH) - DDG-EPHI, Incident Manager

National COVID-19 Response Incident Managementsystem, Emergency Operation Center FOR MORE INFORMATION and NOTIFICATION
Web: www.ephi.gov.et
Follow us on Twitter: @EPHIEthiopia

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ephipage/

Telegram: https://t.me/EthPHI
Call: 8335/952 (TOLL FREE LINE) or 011 276 5340 Email: ephieoc@gmail.com or phemdatacenter@gmail.com