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NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTER (PHEOC), ETHIOPIA

COVID-19 PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN ETHIOPIA

WEEKLY BULLETIN

Epi-Week- 35 (August 30 – September 05, 2021)

BULLETIN No. 71

I. HIGHLIGHTS

- A total of 52,290 laboratory samples were tested in the Epi-Week-35 bringing the total number of samples tested to 3,277,931.
- A total of 8,867 new confirmed COVID-19 cases and 119 COVID-19 related deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-35 bringing the total cases and death to 314,984 and 4,763 respectively.
- On September 05, 2021, there are 727 cases in severe condition which is higher than the maximum number
 of daily cases in severe condition in the previous week (602).
- A total of 235,514 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been managed at Home Based Isolation and Care so far; 9,123 of these were enrolled in the Epi-Week-35.
- The number of deaths due to COVID-19, critical cases and the number of positive samples among the tested samples have shown increment in this week.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has added another SARS-COV-2 variant of interest named "mu" to its list to monitor.
- An in person joint forum of leadership of the Ministry of Health, heads of regional health bureaus and responsible institutions was held in Addis Ababa.



Figure 1: A joint meeting among ministry of health and regional health bureau leadership, September 03, 2021, Addis Ababa

II. Subjects in Focus:

a) Vaccination against COVID-19 in Ethiopia

 In Ethiopia, a total of 2,523,079 doses of COVID-19 vaccine (either AstraZeneca, Sinopharm or Johnson and Johnson) are administered so far. Among the vaccinated individuals 481,696 (19%) people are fully vaccinated.

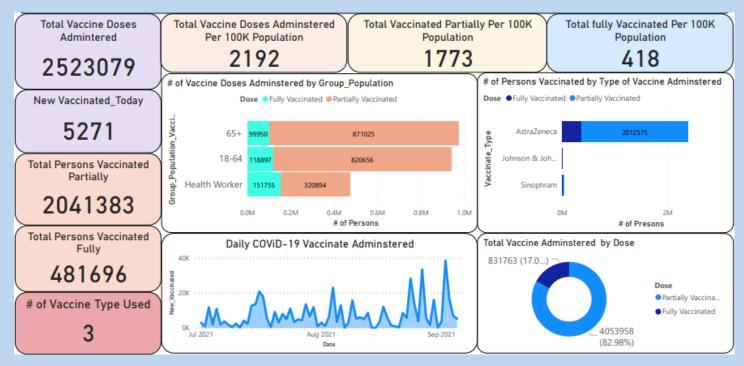


Figure 2: Summary of vaccination against COVID-19 in Ethiopia as of September 05, 2021

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 September, 2021.
 - O Globally, cases of the Alpha variant have been reported in 194 (one new) country, territories or areas, while 141 countries (no new country) reported cases of the Beta variant; 92 countries (one new country) reported cases of the Gamma variant; 174 countries (four 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 over 6.5 million new cases reported this week (August 30-September 05), the number of new cases reported globally remains similar to the previous week (Figure 3).
- The number of deaths reported globally this week was also similar to last week, with over 108,000 new deaths reported.
- As of September 05, 2021, a total of 214,414,905 COVID-19 cases and 4,351,251 deaths (CFR=2.03%) have occurred globally. Of the total cases and deaths reported since the beginning of the outbreak, 6,551,240 cases and 108,866 deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-35.
- 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 (1,598,793 new cases), India (834,345 new cases), Brazil (449,326 new cases), the United Kingdom (284,213 new cases) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (254,629 new cases).
- In Africa, as of September 05, 2021, a total of 7,838,622 cases and 195,578 deaths were reported across the continent (CFR=2.50%). Of these 228,627 cases (23% decrease compared to previous week) and 6,387 deaths (22% decrease compared to previous week) were reported during the Epi-Week-35.
- 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.

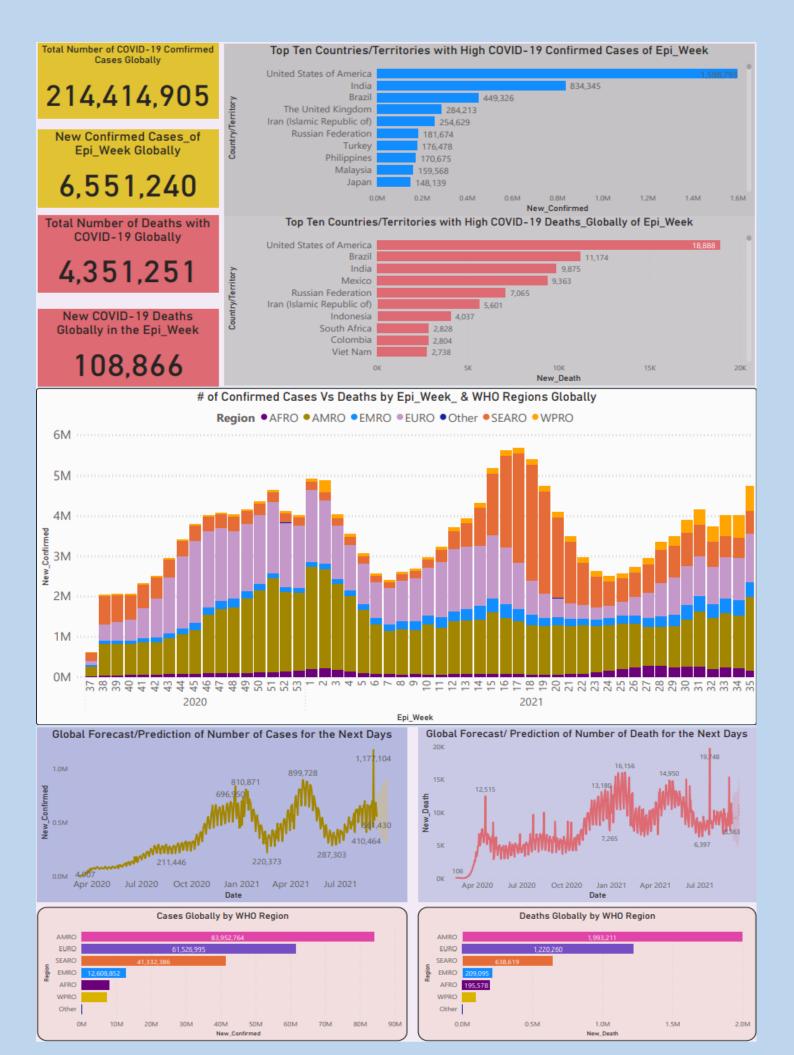


Figure 3: COVID-19 Global Situation Update as of September 05, 2021 (Source: WHO)

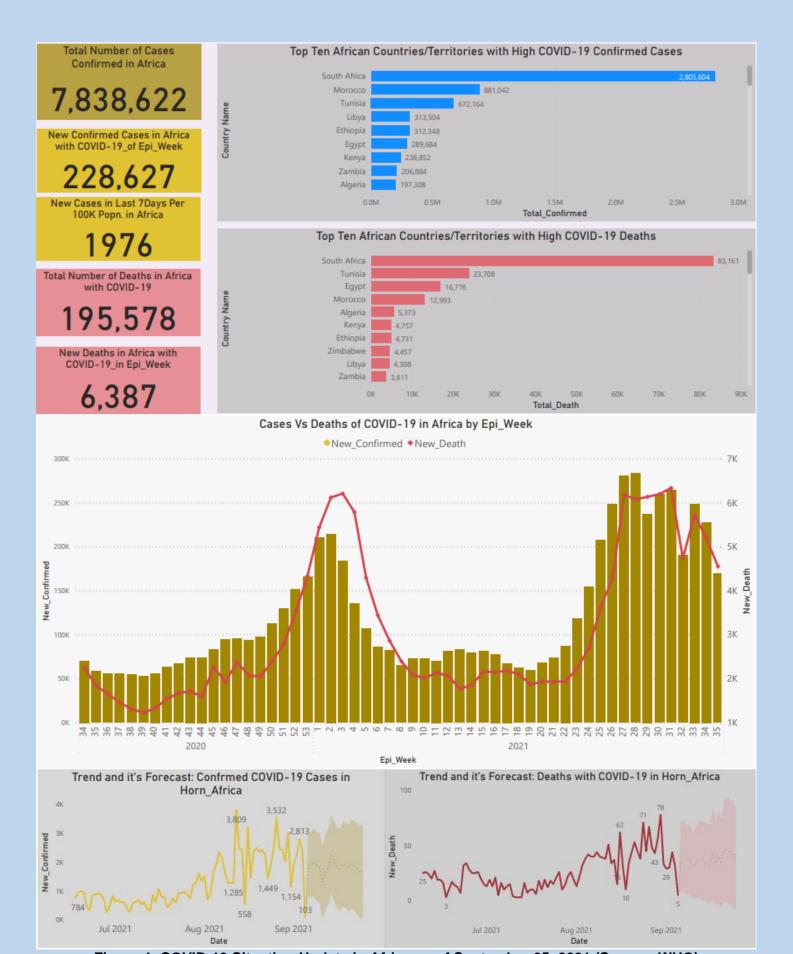


Figure 4: COVID-19 Situation Update in Africa as of September 05, 2021 (Source: WHO)

b. National COVID-19 situation:

- As of September 05, 2021, a total of 314,984 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 4,763 deaths were recorded
 in the country with a case fatality rate of 1.51%. 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.
- Eight-thousand-eight-hundred-sixty-seven (8,867) newly confirmed COVID-19 cases and 119 COVID-19 related deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-35.
- In this week, there is 14% decrease in the number of COVID-19 confirmed cases which may be attributed to the decrease in the number of laboratory tests.
- There is a 30% increase in the number of deaths due to COVID-19 compared to 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-35 of 2021

Regions	New_Tested ▼	New_Case	New_HF_Admission	New_Deaths	Positivity Rate	# of Recovery
Addis Ababa	41486	7419	582	99	17.7	8359
Oromia	4607	726	97	12	15.9	138
SNNPR	2437	312	44	3	13.0	146
Dire Dawa	1033	62	3	0	6.6	47
Sidama	714	170	16	2	24.7	45
Amhara	709	154	34	2	22.7	50
Afar	597	1	0	0	0.1	5
Somali	247	2	0	0	1.4	2
Harari	218	15	2	1	9.1	16
Gambella	139	5	0	0	6.2	3
Benishangul G	103	1	5	0	4.7	3
Tigray	0	0	0	0		0
Total	52290	8867	783	119	11.9	8814
***			**** Positivity Rate is the Averages	of Regional Distribution	ons	

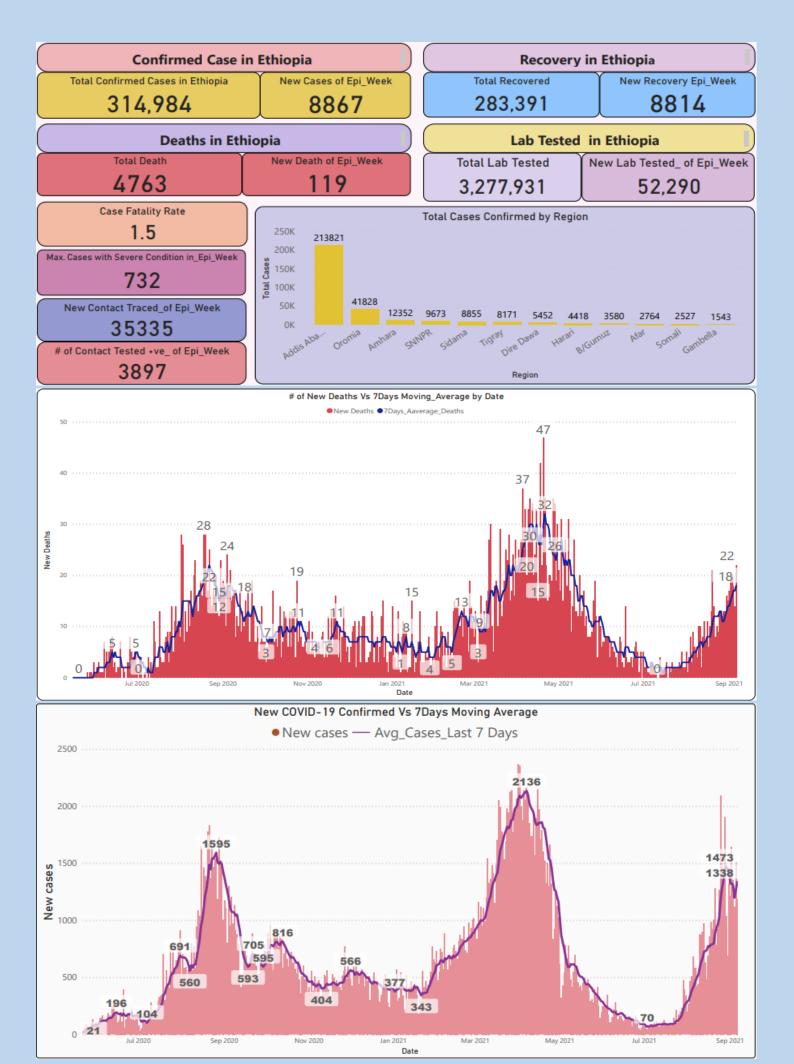


Figure 5: Summary of the COVID-19 situation in Ethiopia as of September 05, 2021, Ethiopia

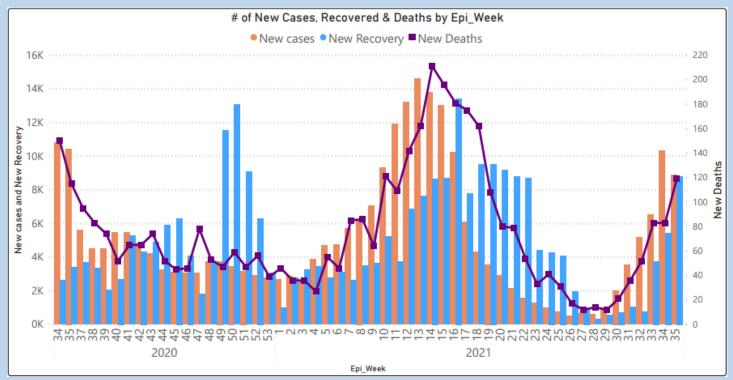


Figure 6: COVID-19 confirmed cases, recovery and death by Epi-Week as of September 05, 2021, Ethiopia

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.

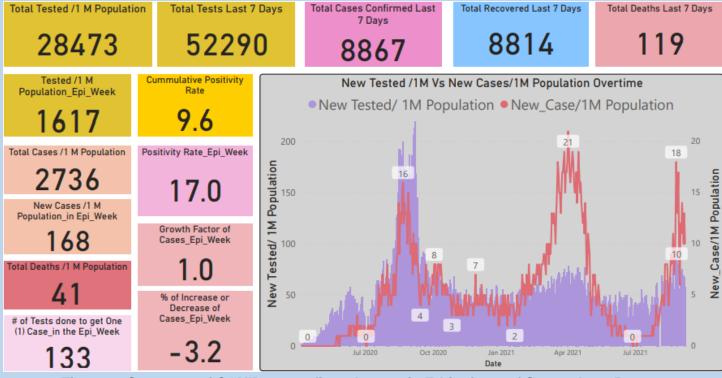


Figure 7: Summary of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Ethiopia as of September 05, 2021.

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 September 05, 2021:
 - A total of 403,300 contacts of confirmed cases have been identified. Of these, 3,688 contacts were identified in the Epi-Week-35.
 - Of total contacts, 341,021 (84.55%) have completed follow-up, while 7,800 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, 44,794 (11.10%) of the contacts (symptomatic plus asymptomatic) have been tested positive.
- Contacts of the confirmed cases contributed for the 14.22% 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.

Total Number of Contacts Traced 403300 Total Contacts Completed Follow Up 341021 # of Contacts Completed Follow Up in the Epi_Week 2506 # of Contacts Under Follow Up 2943

of Contacts Traced in the Epi_Week 3688

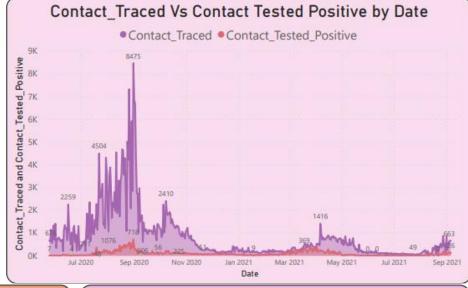
of Contacts Traced to get one(1) case in the Epi_Week

Positivity Rate of Contacts in the Epi_Week

36.8

Cummulative Contacts Tested Positive

44794



of Contacts Tested Positive in the Epi_Week

796

Total Asymptomatic Contacts Tested Positive

% Contribution of Contact Positive to Total Confirmed

14

% Contribution of Contact Positive to Confirmed Cases_Epi_Week

19

of Asymptomatic Contacts Tested Positive in

620

Total Contacts Tested

33482

of Contacts Tested in the Epi_Week

2163

% of Asymptomatic from total Contacts Tested Positive_Epi_Week

41

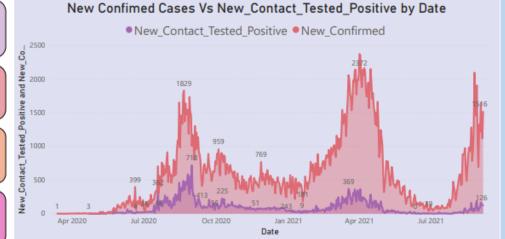
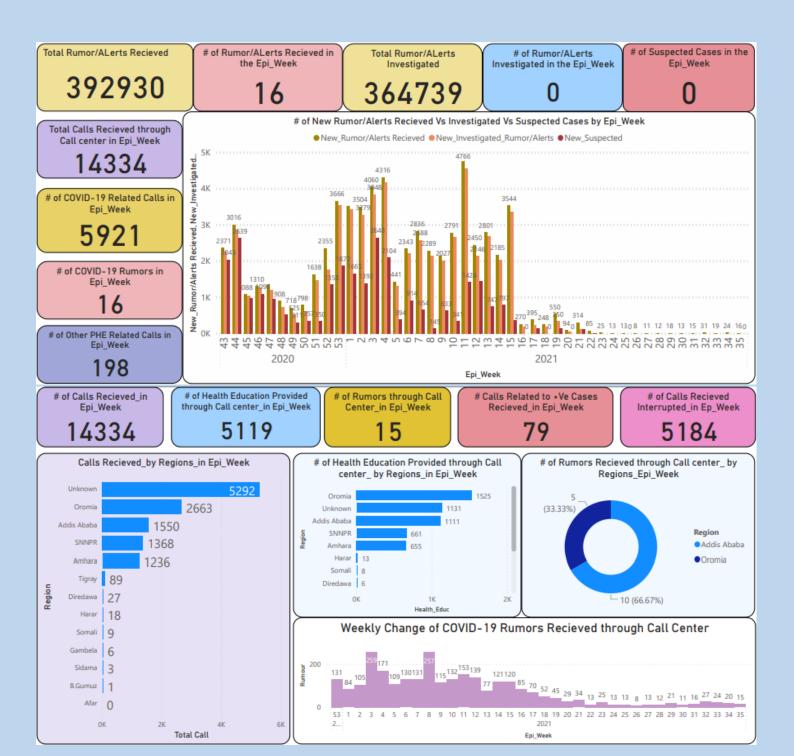




Figure 8: Summary of COVID-19 contact tracing as of September 05, 2021, Ethiopia.

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 September 05, 2021:
 - 392,930 rumors/alerts have been received and investigated. Of these, 16 rumors were reported in the Epi-Week-35.
 - 279,089 (71.02%) of the rumors/alerts have fulfilled the suspected case definition.
- 14,334 COVID-19 related calls are received through call centers in this Epi-week.



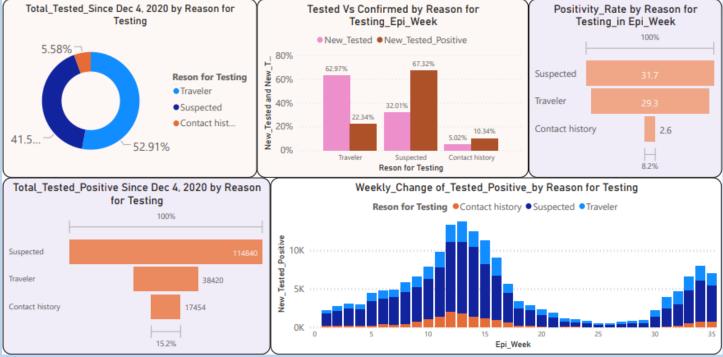


Figure 9: Summary of COVID-19 rumor/alert investigation as of September 05, 2021, Ethiopia.

iii. Point of entry and Quarantine related activities

- Since the start of the outbreak, 2,629,951 passengers have been screened at the Point of Entries of Ethiopia and 808,002 (31%) of them were screened at Bole International Airport.
- Of the total passengers screened, 29,295 were screened for COVID-19 in the Epi-Week-35.
- As of September 05, 2021, among the passengers coming with COVID-19 PCR test result certificates 56
 (four in Epi-week-35) passengers with PCR positive certificates were identified during health screening. A
 total of 93 (two in week-35) 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, 2,676 tests are conducted among which 57 positive cases are detected as of September 05, 2021.
- A total of 59,712 returnees were received through Bole International Airport since April 28, 2021. A total of 3,993 returnees were received in the Epi-week-35. The returnees are admitted to Wosen, Kotebe, Gurdsholla, Megenagna, Kirkos, Nifasilk Lafto, Gerji and Entoto returnee centers. 58,234 returnees are discharged and there are 1,478 returnees currently in returnees' centers as of September 05, 2021.

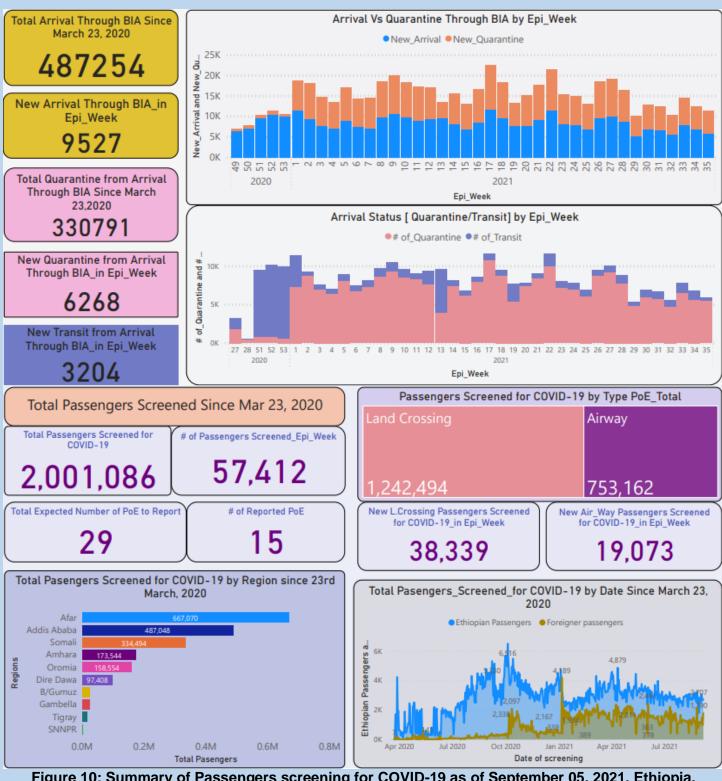


Figure 10: Summary of Passengers screening for COVID-19 as of September 05, 2021, Ethiopia.

Laboratory related activities

- As of 05 September 2021, a total of 3,277,931 samples have been tested for COVID-19 by laboratories across the country.
- 52,290 laboratory tests were processed during the Epi-Week-35 which is a 15% decrease compared to number of tests performed in the previous week.
- The laboratory test positivity rate for the Epi-Week-35 is 16.96%, which is higher than that of the preceding week (16.75%).

- Sidama, Amhara and Oromia regional states and Addis Ababa city administration have reported positivity rates higher than the national weighted average (figure 12 below).
- Among the total COVID-19 laboratory tests performed in Ethiopia, a total of 235,598 laboratory tests are performed by Ag-RDT among which 11,002 is performed in the Epi-week-35 (figure 11 below).

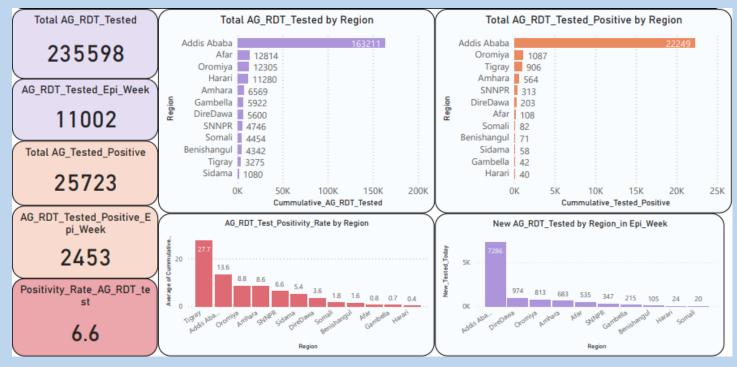


Figure 11: Update on laboratory tests performed by Ag-RDT, as of September 05, 2021

Total Tested

3277931

of New Tested in the Epi_Week

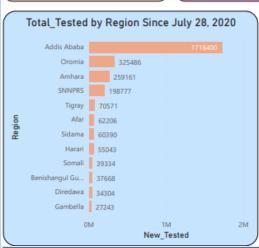
52290

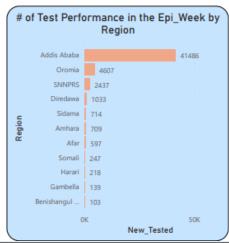
Total Tested / 1M Population

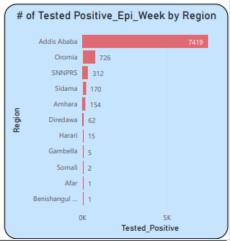
28473

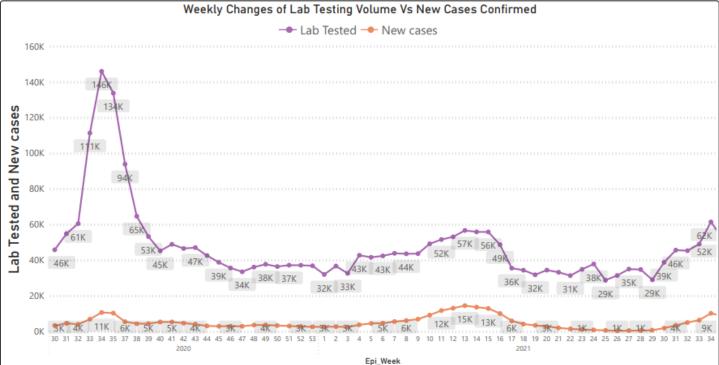
New Tested / 1M Population of Ep_Week

1617









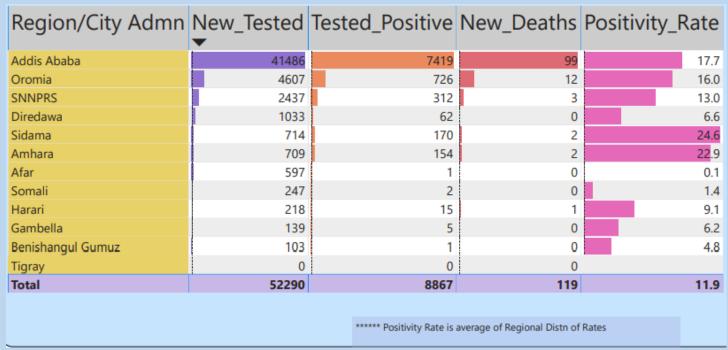


Figure 12: Summary of COVID-19 laboratory testing as of September 05, 2021, Ethiopia.

V. Case Management and Facility Readiness

a. COVID-19 treatment center

- There were total of 8,814 newly recovered COVID-19 cases during the Epi-Week-35, bringing the total number of recovered cases to 283,991 (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 six consecutive weeks. On September 05, 2021, there are 727 cases in severe condition which is higher than the maximum number of daily cases in severe conditions in the previous week (602).

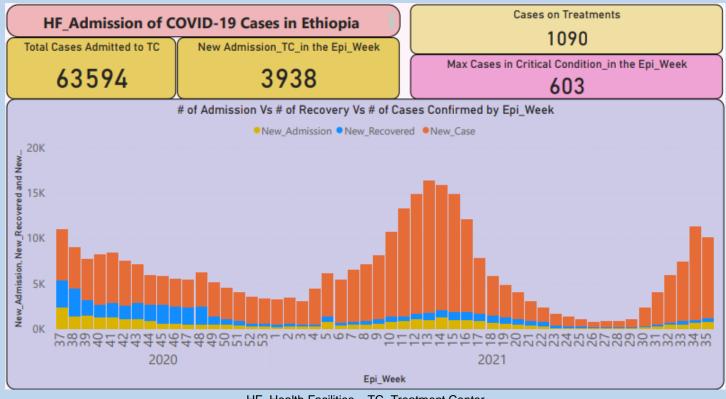


Figure 13: Summary of COVID-19 cases in Health Facilities/Treatment centers, as of September 05, 2021.

Table 2: Summary of COVID-19 cases at treatment centers as of September 05, 2021

Regions	Total_Case	New_Case	Total_Admission	New_Admission	Total_Death	Total_Recovered	On_Treatment	Critical_Case
Addis Ababa	213821	1282	32537	110	3317	27838	848	592
Oromia	41828	162	7552	12	547	6897	110	74
Amhara	12352	7	4665	5	269	4353	31	22
SNNPR	9673	49	4496	1	162	4320	57	23
Sidama	8855	4	3487	1	167	3238	20	3
Tigray	8171	0	5290	0	59	5222	0	0
Dire Dawa	5452	9	1199	2	74	1118	10	4
Harari	4418	3	1289	2	157	1125	6	6
Benishangul G	3580	0	906	0	20	877	7	3
Afar	2764	0	826	0	5	812	0	0
Somali	2527	0	665	0	58	603	1	0
Gambella	1543	0	682	0	8	649	0	0

b. Home Based Isolation and Care (HBIC):

- So far, 235,514 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been on HBIC. Of them 227,052 (96.%) have recovered and 38 (0.016%) died.
- Of these, 9,123 cases have been enrolled to HBIC, 8,934 cases have recovered and one death due to COVID-19 in the Epi-Week-35.
- As of September 05, 2021, there are 10,712 cases on HBIC.
- So far, 1,992 (105 in the Epi-week-35) of the cases have been transferred from treatment centers to HBIC after improvement.
- So far, 981 (15 in the Epi-week-35) of the cases have been transferred from HBIC to treatment centers for better care.

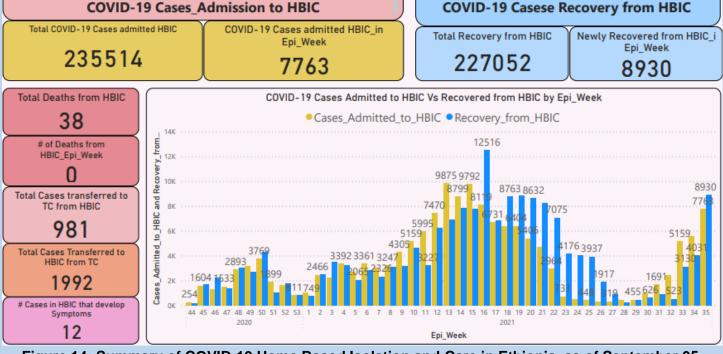


Figure 14: Summary of COVID-19 Home Based Isolation and Care in Ethiopia, as of September 05, 2021.

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 Ethiopian Public Health Institute on the current situation of COVID-19 pandemic in Ethiopia, new variants of SARS-COV-2 and the new directive 803/2021.



Figure 15: Press release on COVID-19 situation in Ethiopia, August 31, 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 16: COVID-19 situation update as of September 05, 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.
- The joint forum focuses on the major achievements of the 2013 Ethiopian fiscal year (EFY), the gaps identified and specific bottlenecks, as well as the major activities planned for 2014 EFY and other current health issues conducted. The Minister of Health, Dr. Lia Tadesse, on the occasion said the Ministry of Health has achieved remarkable results in overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic in 2013 and will continue to implement the plans.



Figure 17: A joint meeting among ministry of health and regional health bureau leadership, September 03, 2021, Addis Ababa

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 directive 803/2013.
- 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
- o 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:
 - o Properly isolate from other family members.
 - Take full responsibility in prevention of transmission
 - 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;
 - o Don't touch your mouth, nose or eye by unwashed hands;
 - o Keep physical distancing; avoid mass gathering and shaking hands;
 - o 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	Email address (PHEOCs
		hotline	email)
Ethiopian Public Health	https://www.ephi.gov.et/	8335/952	ephieoc@gmail.com
Institute Main Website			
Ethiopian Public Health	https://covid19.ephi.gov.et/		
Institute COVID-19 Website			
Ethiopian Public Health	https://www.facebook.com/ephipa		
Institute Facebook Page	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 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/snnprhealthbureau/?ref=br_rs	6929	snnppheoc@gmail.com
Tigray Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/tigrayrhb/	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; www.ephi.gov.et

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National COVID-19 Response Incident Management system, Emergency Operation Center FOR MORE INFORMATION and NOTIFICATION

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