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NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTER (PHEOC), ETHIOPIA

COVID-19 PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN ETHIOPIA

WEEKLY BULLETIN

Epi-Week- 37 (September 13 – 19, 2021)

BULLETIN Nº: 73

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I. HIGHLIGHTS

- A total of 60,738 laboratory samples were tested in the Epi-Week-37 bringing the total number of samples tested to 3,384,314.
- A total of 9,857 new confirmed COVID-19 cases and 201 COVID-19 related deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-37 bringing the total cases and deaths to 332,961 and 5,130 respectively.
- On September 19, 2021, there are 784 cases in severe condition which is higher than the maximum number of daily cases in severe condition in the previous week (746).
- A total of 253,177 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been managed at Home Based Isolation and Care so far; 9,360 of these were enrolled in the Epi-Week-37.
- The number of COVID-19 cases, deaths due to COVID-19 and critical cases have shown increment in this
 week.
- A team of professionals facilitating public health emergency response regarding Internally Displaced Peoples
 (IDP) is integrated to the COVID-19 response Incident Management System (IMS).

II. Subjects in Focus:

a) Vaccination against COVID-19 in Ethiopia

- The minimum age for vaccination against COVD-19 is decided to be 18 years in Ethiopia. This is made to increase vaccination coverage and maximize immune population. Hence anyone who is 18 years and more can get vaccinated against COVID-19 in Ethiopia.
- In Ethiopia, a total of 3,018,870 doses of COVID-19 vaccine (either AstraZeneca, Sinopharm or Johnson and Johnson) are administered so far. Among the vaccinated individuals 975,244 (32%) people are fully vaccinated.

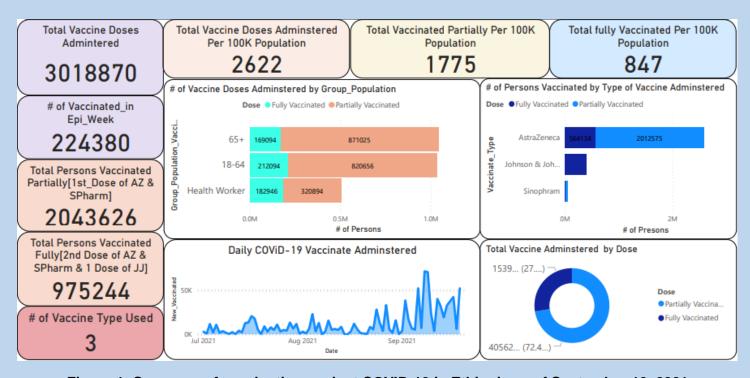


Figure 1: Summary of vaccination against COVID-19 in Ethiopia as of September 19, 2021

b) SARS-COV-2 new variants

- In Ethiopia Alpha, Beta and Delta SARS-COV-2 variants are detected in Ethiopia.
- The new variants of SARS-COV-2 (Variants of Concern and Variants of Interest) are also being detected in new countries and territories. Below are the incidence of the four variants of concern detected in various countries and territories as of September 19, 2021.
 - O Globally, cases of the Alpha variant have been reported in 193 (no new) country, territories or areas, while 142 countries (one new country) reported cases of the Beta variant; 96 countries (four new countries) reported cases of the Gamma variant; 185 countries (five new countries) reported cases of the Delta variant.
- The category of 'Alerts for further monitoring' have been renamed 'Variants Under Monitoring' (VUMs). The change applies only to the name, while the definition remains the same. Primary actions by Member States and WHO following the identification of a new VUM is also outlined¹.

¹ https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/weekly-epidemiological-update-on-covid-19---21-september-2021

III. EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SITUATION

a. Global Situation

- With over 5.3 million new cases reported this week (September 13 19), the number of new cases reported globally decreased by around 5% compared to the previous week (Figure 2).
- The number of deaths reported globally this week also decreased by around 3% compared to last week, with over 97,000 new deaths reported.
- As of September 19, 2021, a total of 221,528,757 COVID-19 cases and 4,463,974 deaths (CFR=2.02%) have occurred globally. Of the total cases and deaths reported since the beginning of the outbreak, 5,340,086 cases and 97,228 deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-37.
- 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 (1,126,383 new cases), India (851,787 new cases), Brazil (294,701 new cases), the United Kingdom (224,087 new cases) and Turkey (195,369 new cases).
- In Africa, as of September 19, 2021, a total of 8,114,072 cases and 202,845 deaths were reported across the continent (CFR=2.50%). Of these, 188,702 cases (4% decrease compared to previous week) and 4,526 deaths (22% decrease compared to previous week) were reported during the Epi-Week-37.
- 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.

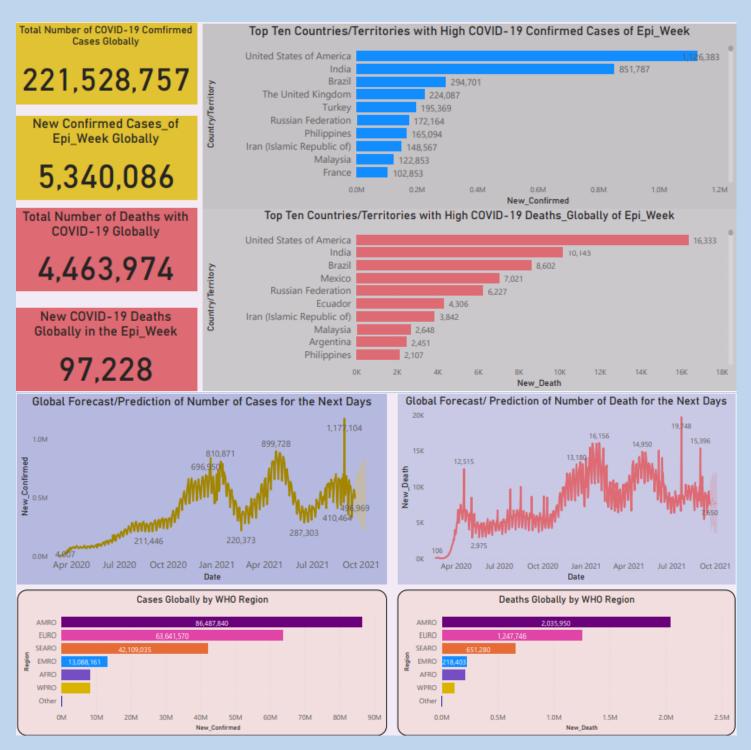


Figure 2: COVID-19 Global Situation Update as of September 19, 2021 (Source: WHO)

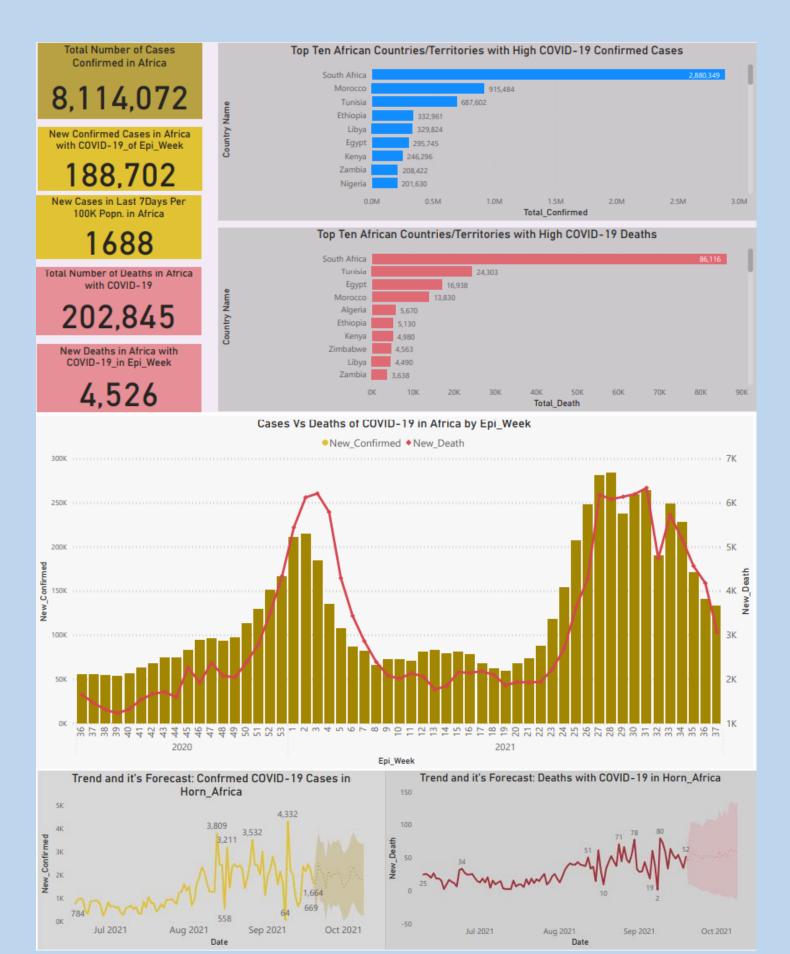


Figure 3: COVID-19 Situation Update in Africa as of September 19, 2021 (Source: WHO)

b. National COVID-19 situation:

- As of September 19, 2021, a total of 332,961 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 5,130 deaths were recorded
 in the country with a case fatality rate of 1.54%. This puts Ethiopia in the fourth position by the number of
 confirmed cases and in the six position by the number of deaths due to COVID-19 in Africa.
- Nine-thousand-eight-hundred-fifty-seven (9,857) newly confirmed COVID-19 cases and 201 COVID-19 related deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-37.
- In this week, there is 21% increase in the number of COVID-19 confirmed cases.
- There is also a 21% 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-37 of 2021

Regions	New_Tested	New_Case	New_HF_Admission	New_Deaths	Positivity Rate	# of Recovery
Addis Ababa	45003	7004	586	139	11.3	8797
Oromia	4760	1074	188	39	14.3	334
SNNPR	4537	934	94	8	18.4	414
Dire Dawa	1286	215	20	4	13.3	68
Amhara	981	246	53	3	50.6	49
Sidama	934	316	18	7	27.9	130
Afar	613	6	0	0	2.7	1
Harari	381	36	5	1	33.4	32
Somali	202	20	0	0	5.8	0
Benishangul G	142	3	0	0	5.6	2
Gambella	99	3	0	0	0.0	0
Tigray	0	0	0	0		0
Total	58938	9857	964	201	18.6	9827
			**** Positivity Rate is the Averages	of Regional Distribution	ons	

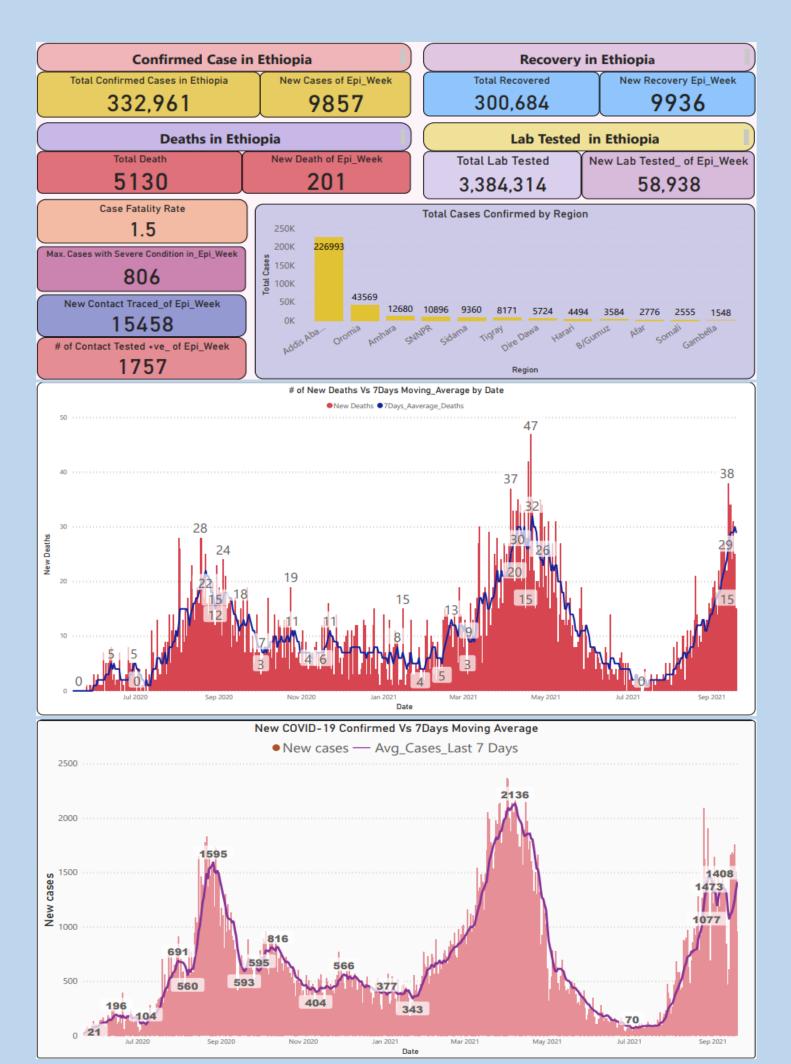


Figure 4: Summary of the COVID-19 situation in Ethiopia as of September 19, 2021, Ethiopia

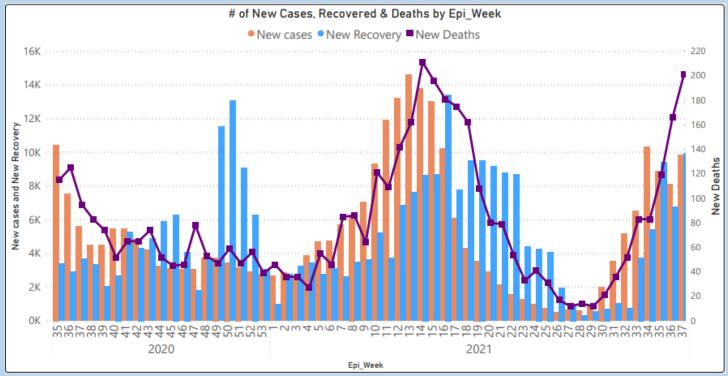


Figure 5: COVID-19 confirmed cases, recovery and death by Epi-Week as of September 19, 2021, Ethiopia

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.

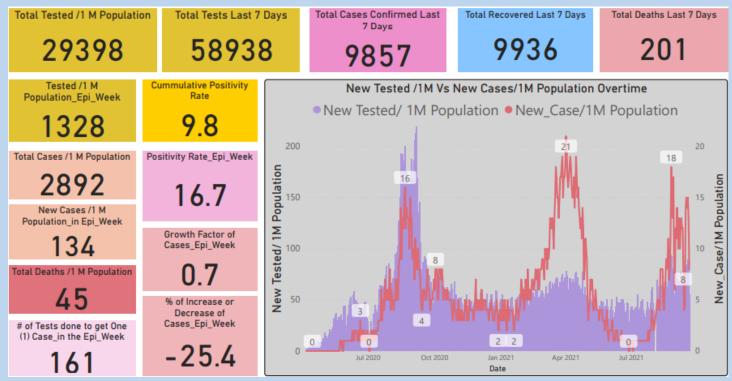


Figure 6: Summary of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Ethiopia as of September 19, 2021.

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 19, 2021:
 - A total of 413,891 contacts of confirmed cases have been identified. Of these, 4,566 contacts were identified in the Epi-Week-37.
 - Of total contacts, 335,422 (81.04%) have completed follow-up, while 8,555 contacts are still on follow-up.
 - All the contacts traced are from Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa city administration and SNNPR; no contact tracing activity is reported from other regions.
- Overall, 43,584 (10.53%) of the contacts (symptomatic plus asymptomatic) have been tested positive.
- Contacts of the confirmed cases contributed for the 13.09% 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.

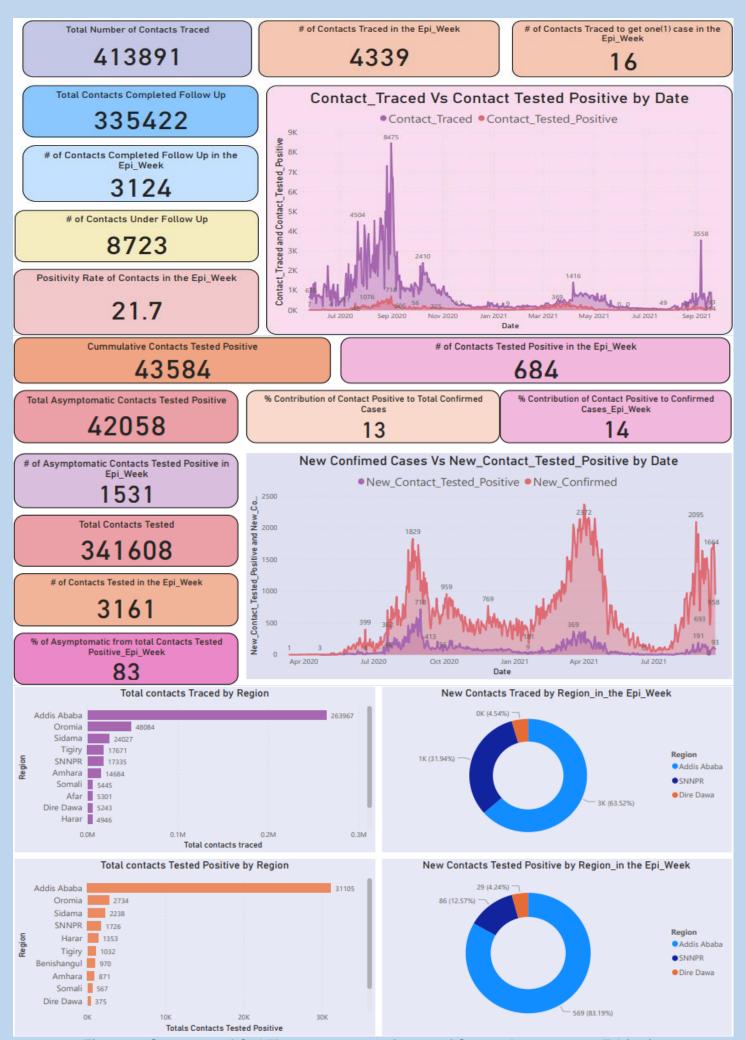


Figure 7: Summary of COVID-19 contact tracing as of September 19, 2021, Ethiopia.

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 19, 2021:
 - 392,973 rumors/alerts have been received and investigated. Of these, 21 rumors were reported in the Epi-Week-37.
 - o 279,089 (71.02%) of the rumors/alerts have fulfilled the suspected case definition.
- 14,395 COVID-19 related calls are received through call centers in this Epi-week.

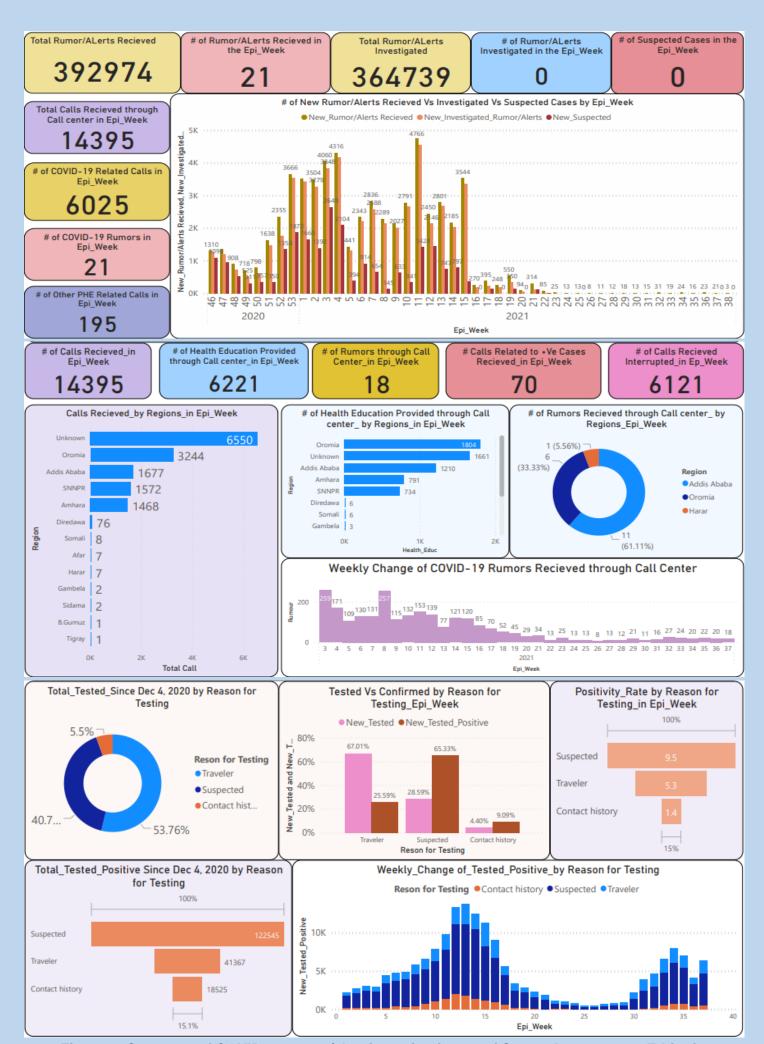


Figure 8: Summary of COVID-19 rumor/alert investigation as of September 19, 2021, Ethiopia.

iii. Point of entry and Quarantine related activities

- Since the start of the outbreak, 2,687,844 passengers have been screened at the Point of Entries of Ethiopia and 823,727 (31%) of them were screened at Bole International Airport.
- Of the total passengers screened, 34,532 were screened for COVID-19 in the Epi-Week-37.
- As of September 19, 2021, among the passengers coming with COVID-19 PCR test result certificates 58
 (none in Epi-week-37) passengers with PCR positive certificates were identified during health screening. A
 total of 94 (none in week-37) 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 being done at Bole International Airport for returnees. So far, 4,608 tests (996 in week-37) are conducted among which 89 positive cases (30 in week-37) are detected as of September 19, 2021.
- A total of 62,274 returnees were received through Bole International Airport since April 28, 2021. A total of 1,375 returnees were received in the Epi-week-37. The returnees are admitted to Wosen, Kotebe, Gurdsholla, Megenagna, Kirkos, Nifasilk Lafto, Gerji and Entoto returnee centers. 60,541 (97%) returnees are discharged and there are 1,733 returnees currently in returnees' centers as of September 19, 2021.

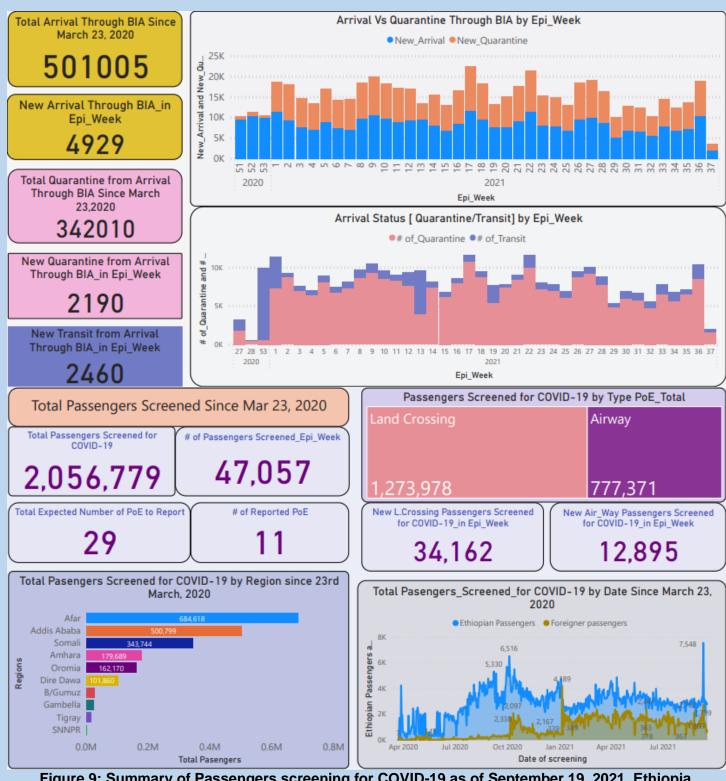


Figure 9: Summary of Passengers screening for COVID-19 as of September 19, 2021, Ethiopia.

Laboratory related activities

- As of 19 September 2021, a total of 3,325,376 samples have been tested for COVID-19 by laboratories across the country.
- 58,938 laboratory tests were processed during the Epi-Week-37 which is a 24% increase compared to number of tests performed in the previous week.
- The laboratory test positivity rate for the Epi-Week-37 is 16.72%, which is lower than that of the preceding week (17.11%).

- Sidama, Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR, Amhara, Oromia regional states and Dire Dawa city administration have reported positivity rates higher than the national weighted average (figure 11 below). There is no report from Tigray regional state since June 29, 2021.
- Among the total COVID-19 laboratory tests performed in Ethiopia, a total of 290,205 laboratory tests are performed by Ag-RDT among which 16,571 is performed in the Epi-week-37 (figure 10 below).

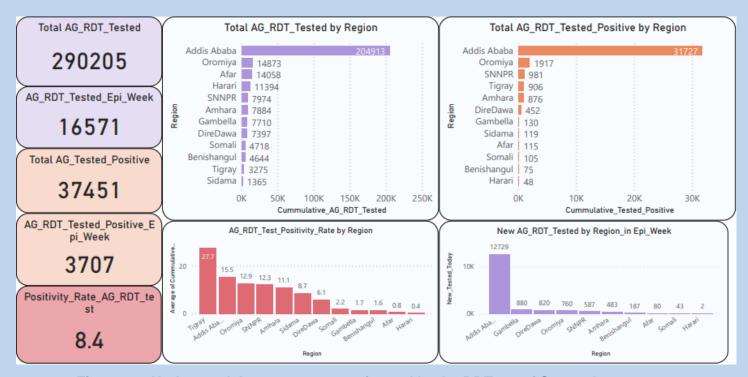


Figure 10: Update on laboratory tests performed by Ag-RDT, as of September 19, 2021

Total Tested

3384314

of New Tested in the Epi_Week

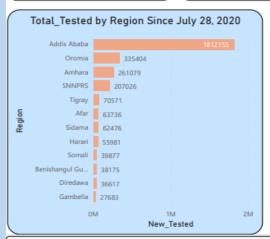
58938

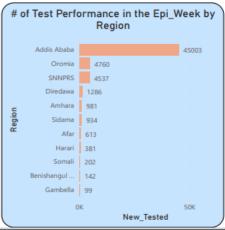
Total Tested / 1M Population

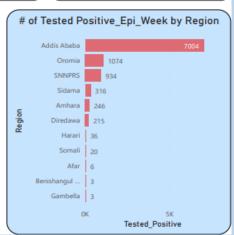
29398

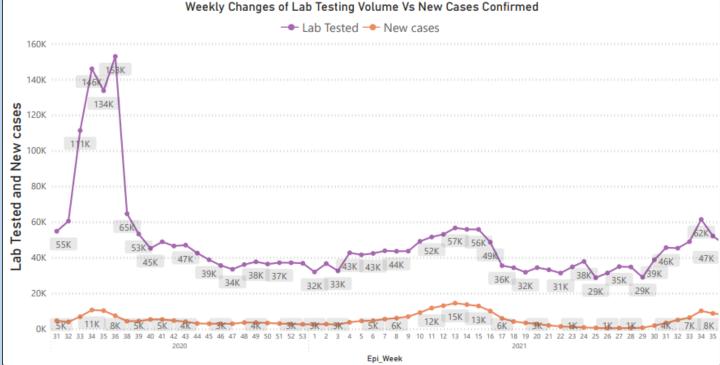
New Tested / 1M Population of Ep_Week

1328









Region/City Admn	New_Tested	Tested_Positive	New_Deaths	Positivity_Rate
	▼			
Addis Ababa	45003	7004	139	15.1
Oromia	4760	1074	39	23.4
SNNPRS	4537	934	8	22.2
Diredawa	1286	215	4	18.2
Amhara	981	246	3	26.2
Sidama	934	316	7	36.0
Afar	613	6	0	0.9
Harari	381	36	1	8.6
Somali	202	20	0	12.6
Benishangul Gumuz	142	3	0	4.3
Gambella	99	3	0	5.9
Tigray	0	0	0	
Total	58938	9857	201	16.6

Figure 11: Summary of COVID-19 laboratory testing as of September 19, 2021, Ethiopia.

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

V. Case Management and Facility Readiness

a. COVID-19 treatment center

- There were total of 9,936 newly recovered COVID-19 cases during the Epi-Week-37, bringing the total number of recovered cases to 300,684 (both from COVID-19 treatment center and from HBIC). This brings the overall recovery rate to 90%.
- The number of cases in severe condition is increasing for the last eight consecutive weeks. On September 19, 2021, there are 784 cases in severe condition which is higher than the maximum number of daily cases in severe conditiond in the previous week (746).

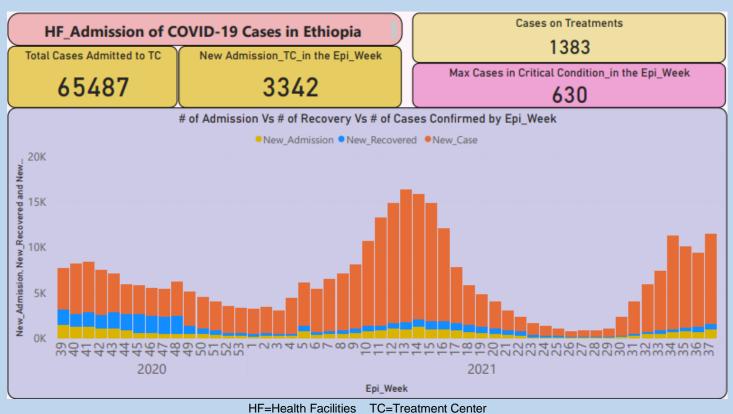


Figure 12: Summary of COVID-19 cases in Health Facilities/Treatment centers, as of September 19, 2021.

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

Regions	Total_Case ▼	New_Case	Total_Admission	New_Admission	Total_Death	Total_Recovered	On_Treatment	Critical_Case
Addis Ababa	226993	709	33671	54	5229	28619	858	600
Oromia	43569	103	7846	28	606	6996	246	108
Amhara	12680	31	4762	0	282	4417	51	33
SNNPR	10896	67	4640	15	276	4359	151	26
Sidama	9360	26	3535	2	192	3265	25	6
Tigray	8171	0	5290	0	59	5222	0	0
Dire Dawa	5724	16	1223	0	74	1133	14	4
Harari	4494	3	1297	0	158	1129	6	6
Benishangul G	3584	0	908	0	22	883	1	1
Afar	2776	3	826	0	5	812	0	0
Somali	2555	0	665	0	58	603	1	0
Gambella	1548	0	682	0	8	649	0	0

b. Home Based Isolation and Care (HBIC):

- So far, 253,177 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been on HBIC. Of them 242,605 (95.82%) have recovered and 38 (0.015%) died.
- Of these, 9,360 cases have been enrolled to HBIC and 9,297 cases have recovered in the Epi-Week-37.
- As of September 19, 2021, there are 11,709 cases on HBIC.
- So far, 2,136 (74 in the Epi-week-37) of the cases have been transferred from treatment centers to HBIC after improvement.
- So far, 1,035 (14 in the Epi-week-37) of the cases have been transferred from HBIC to treatment centers for better care.

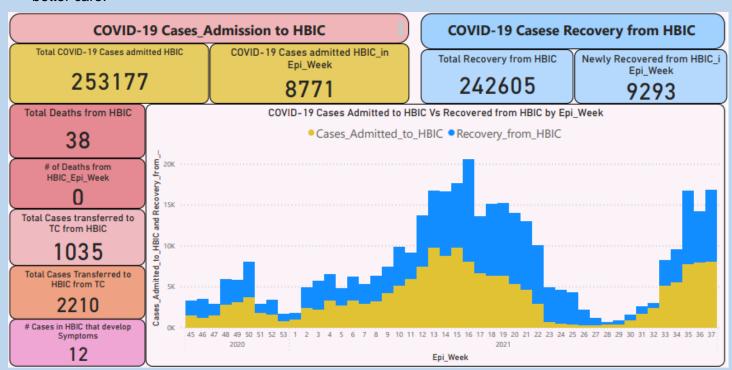


Figure 13: Summary of COVID-19 Home Based Isolation and Care in Ethiopia, as of September 19, 2021.

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.



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

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



Figure 15: COVID-19 situation update as of September 19, 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.
- A team of professionals facilitating emergency response regarding Internally Displaced Peoples (IDP) is integrated to the COVID-19 response Incident Management System (IMS). The team is assigned as "IDP section" and is accountable to the Deputy Incident Manager. This IDP section is integrated to the COVID-19 response IMS at national PHEOC and five regions (Amhara, Afar, B/G, Oromia & Somali). The section is facilitating activities related to Healthcare Workers (HCWs) mapping from IDP sites, surge capacity deployment, resource mobilizing, increasing Ag-RDT and vaccine rollout at IDP sites.

VIII. COVID-19 timeline

 Various major events and major activities have occurred since the COVID-19 pandemic is declared globally.



Figure 18: COVID-19 related events and major activities timeline

IX. Challenges and Way Forward

a. Challenges

- False negative results on travelers certificates.
- 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.
- 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

- Quality assessment on laboratory tests especially on laboratory tests for travelers.
- 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.
- 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.

X. 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 and any individuals above 18 years old.
- 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.
 - 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	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/srhbdotcom/	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; 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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