



NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTER (PHEOC), ETHIOPIA

COVID-19 PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN ETHIOPIA

WEEKLY BULLETIN

Epi-Week- 33 (August 16 – 22, 2021)

BULLETIN No. 69

I. HIGHLIGHTS

- A total of 49,185 laboratory samples were tested in the Epi-Week-33 bringing the total number of samples tested to 3,164,055.
- A total of 6,530 new confirmed COVID-19 cases and 83 COVID-19 related deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-33 bringing the total cases and death to 295,804 and 4,561 respectively.
- On August 22, 2021, there are 484 cases in severe condition which is higher than the maximum number of daily cases in severe condition in the previous week (388).
- A total of 219,479 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been managed at Home Based Isolation and Care so far; 6,153 of these were enrolled in the Epi-Week-33.
- The number of COVID-19 cases, critical cases, deaths and the number of positive samples among the tested samples have shown increment in this week.
- Structural change imposed on COVID-19 response Incident Management System in Ethiopia.
- The existing directive 30/2020 on COVID-19 prevention and control is repealed by a revised and amended [Directive No. 803/2021](#)

II. Subjects in Focus:

a) Vaccination against COVID-19 in Ethiopia

- In Ethiopia, a total of 2,343,609 doses of COVID-19 vaccine (either AstraZeneca, Sinopharm or Johnson and Johnson) are administered so far. Among the vaccinated individuals 312,456 (13%) people are fully vaccinated.

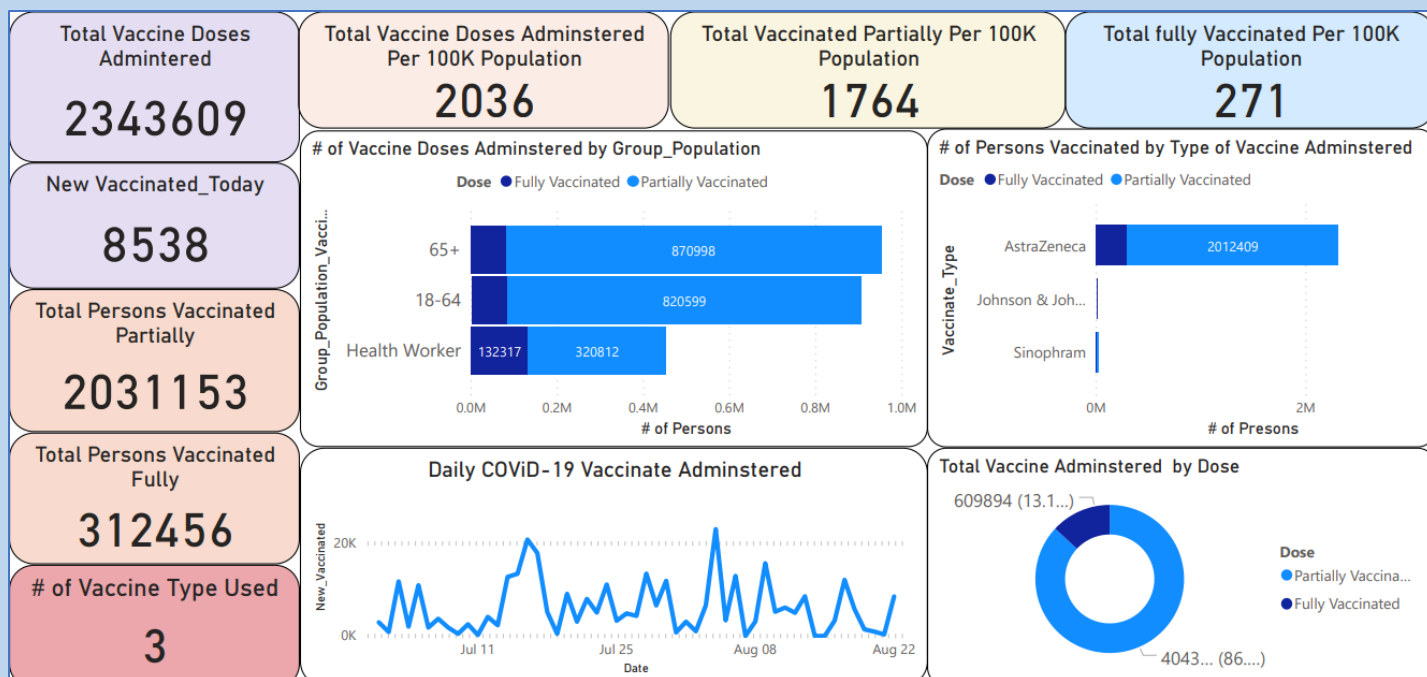


Figure 1: Summary of vaccination against COVID-19 in Ethiopia as of August 22, 2021

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 22, 2021.
 - Globally, cases of the Alpha variant have been reported in 192 (three new) countries, territories or areas, while 141 countries (three new countries) reported cases of the Beta variant; 86 countries (no new country) reported cases of the Gamma variant; 148 countries (three 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

- Globally, over 5.8 million new cases are reported in the last week (Figure 2) which is a 6% increase as compared to the previous week.
- More than 105 thousand new deaths (a 7% increase compared to previous week) are reported globally in the Epi-week-33.
- As of August 22, 2021, a total of 205,657,204 COVID-19 cases and 4,221,218 deaths (CFR=2.05%) have occurred globally. Of the total cases and deaths reported since the beginning of the outbreak, 5,867,717 cases and 105,504 deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-33.
- 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 (1,099,666 new cases), India (668,330 new cases), Brazil (522,177 new cases), the Islamic Republic of Iran (267,988 new cases) and the United Kingdom (227,600 new cases).
- In Africa, as of August 22, 2021, a total of 7,440,560 cases and 185,823 deaths were reported across the continent (CFR=2.50%). Of these 323,198 cases 14% increase compared to previous week) and 8,161 deaths (6% increase compared to previous week) were reported during the Epi-Week-33.
- 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.

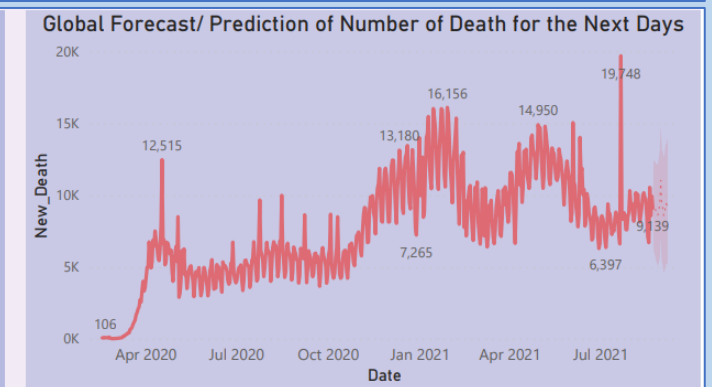
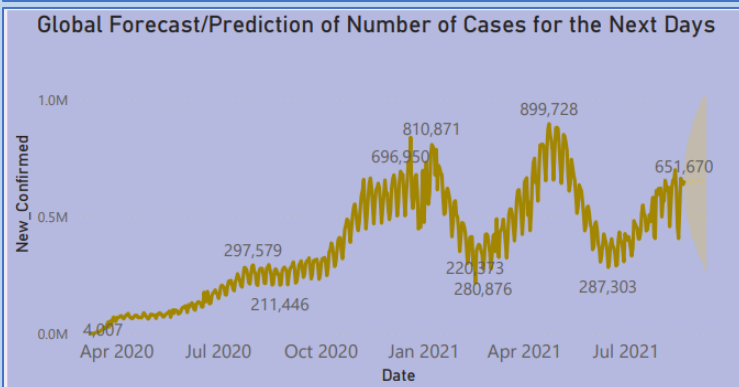
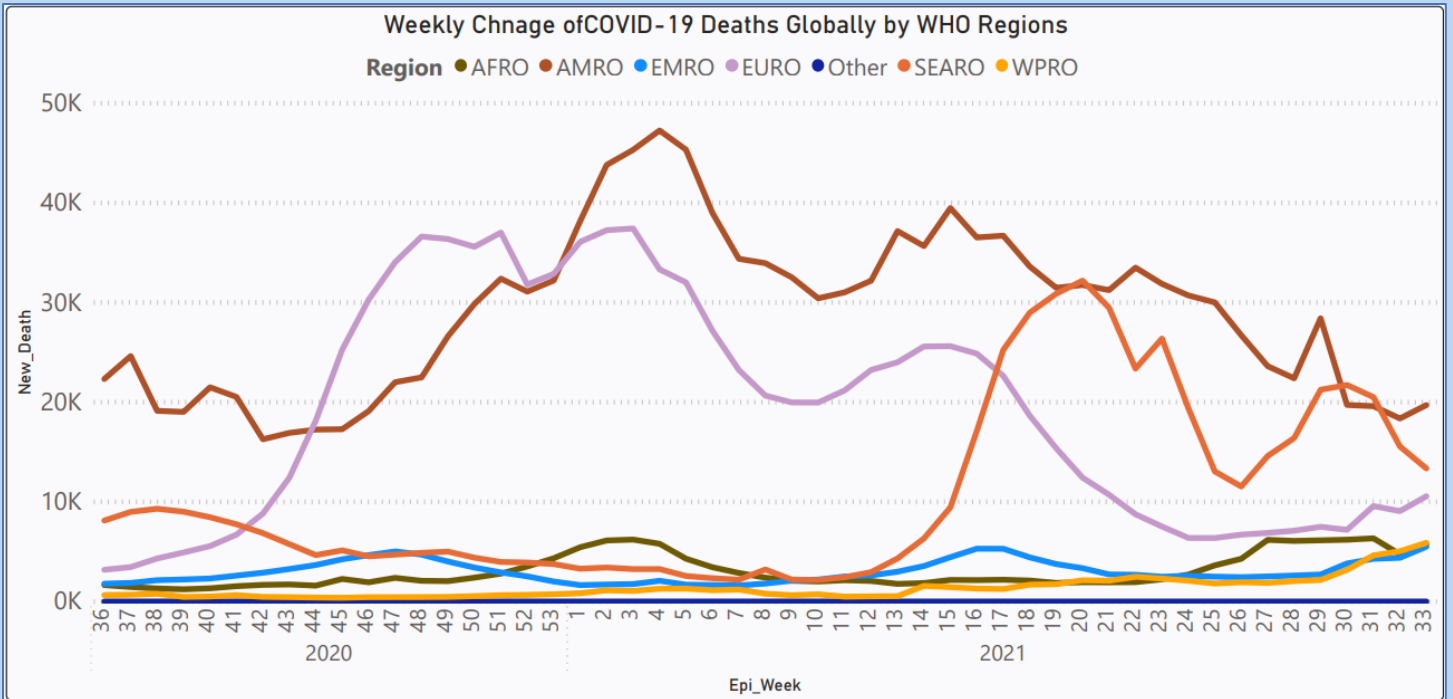
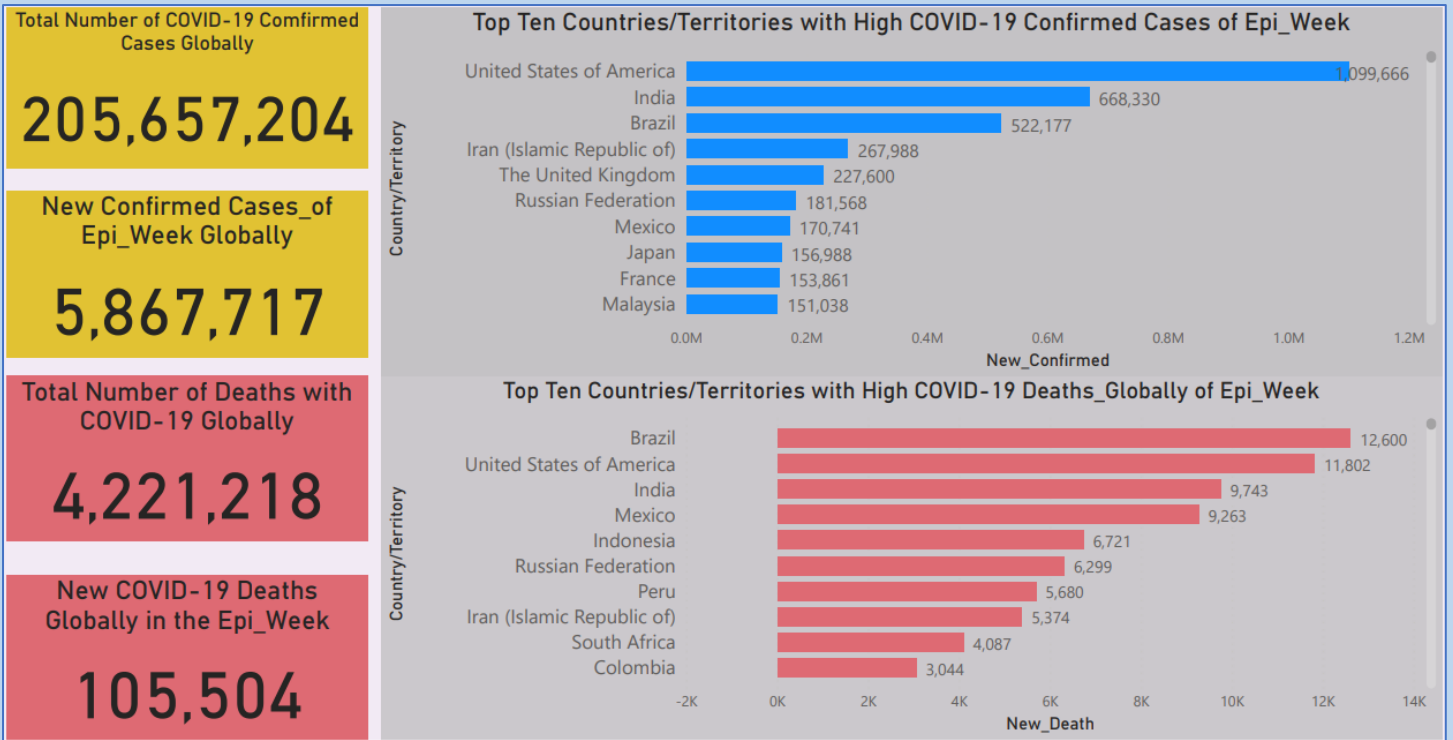


Figure 2: COVID-19 Global Situation Update as of August 22, 2021 (Source: WHO)

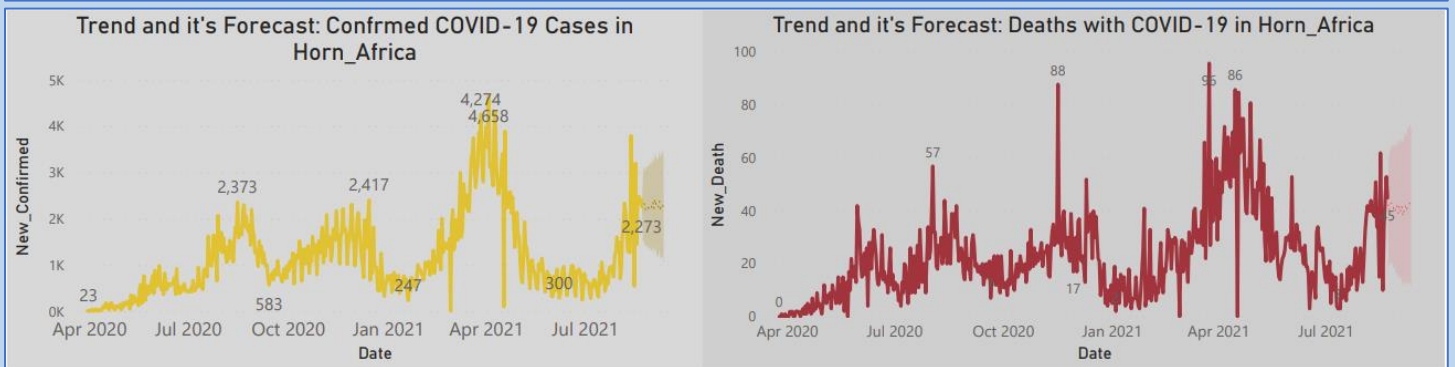
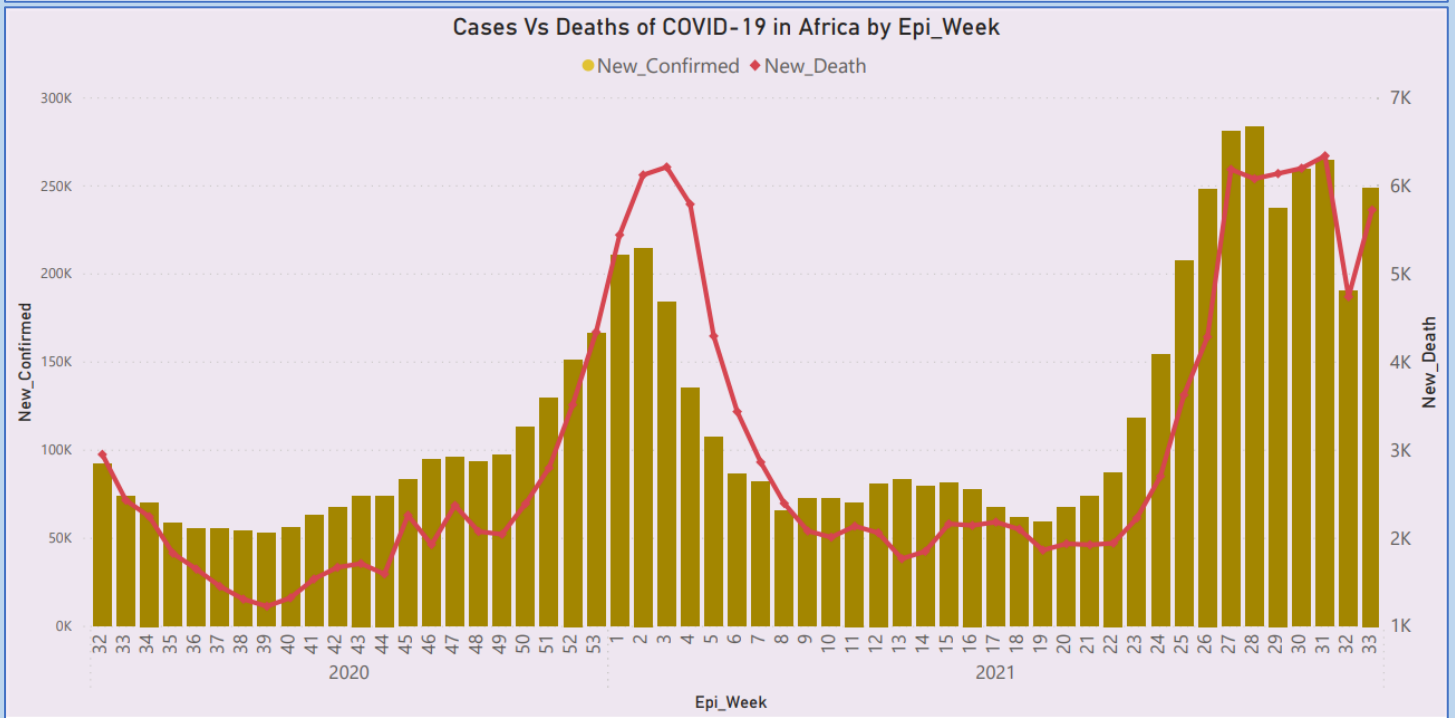
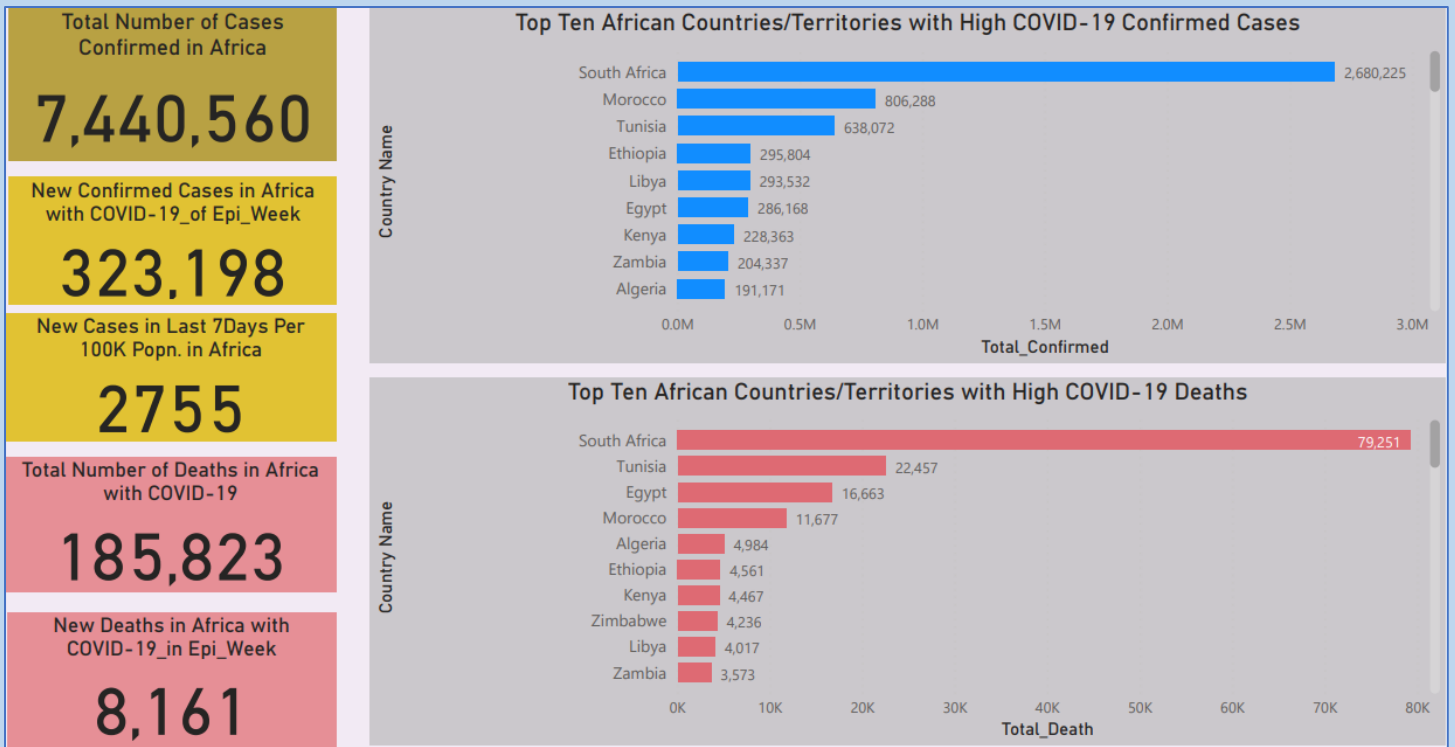


Figure 3: COVID-19 Situation Update in Africa as of August 22, 2021 (Source: WHO)

b. National COVID-19 situation:

- As of August 22, 2021, a total of 295,804 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 4,561 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 sixth position by the number of deaths due to COVID-19 in Africa.
- Six-thousand-five-hundred-thirty (6,530) newly confirmed COVID-19 cases and 83 COVID-19 related deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-33.
- In this week, there is 26% increase in the number of COVID-19 confirmed cases and there is a 60% (31 in number) increase in the number of deaths due to COVID-19.
- 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-33 of 2021

Regions	New_Tested	New_Case	New_HF_Admission	New_Deaths	Positivity Rate	# of Recovery
Addis Ababa	38351	5818	451	63	15.0	1825
Oromia	5863	466	53	12	8.0	141
SNNPR	1516	63	15	0	4.6	25
Afar	961	7	0	0	0.7	5
Dire Dawa	647	23	1	0	3.1	17
Amhara	491	60	14	5	13.9	1724
Sidama	481	73	13	2	14.3	15
Harari	410	15	1	1	5.1	4
Somali	241	2	0	0	0.8	2
Gambella	174	1	0	0	0.5	0
Benishangul G	50	2	2	0	2.4	2
Benishangul	0	0	0	0		1
Tigray	0	0	0	0		0
Total	49185	6530	550	83	6.9	3761
**** Positivity Rate is the Averages of Regional Distributions						

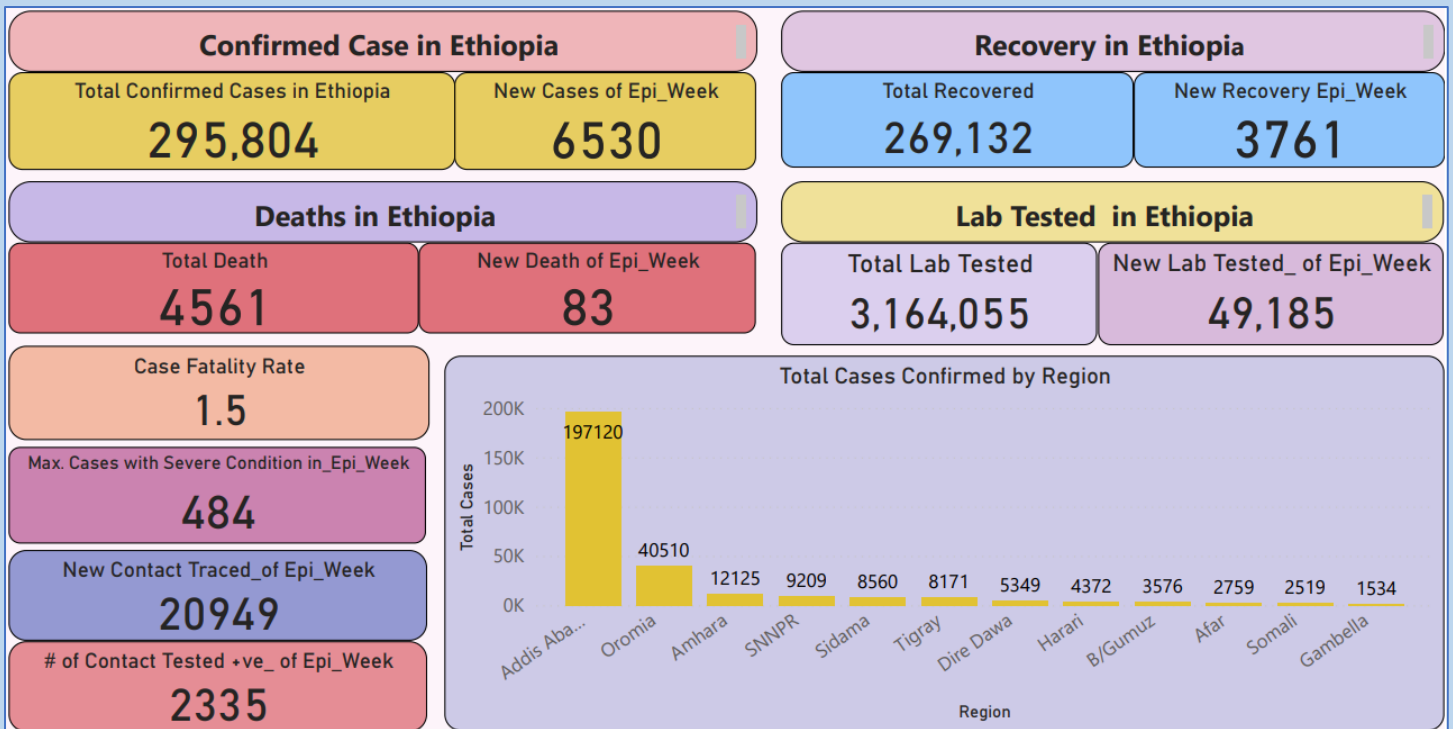


Figure 4: Weekly summary of the COVID-19 situation in Ethiopia as of August 22, 2021, Ethiopia

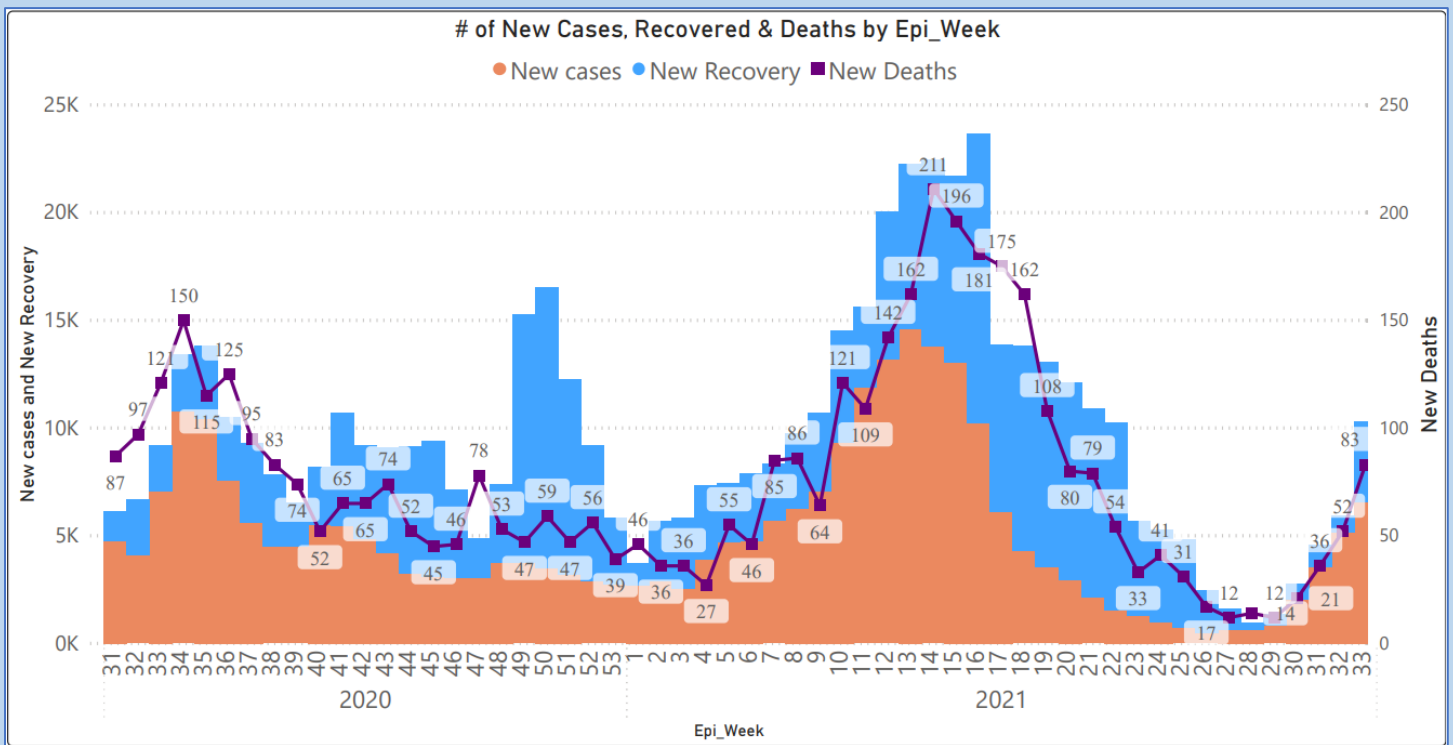


Figure 5: COVID-19 confirmed cases, recovery and death by Epi-Week as of August 22, 2021, Ethiopia

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.

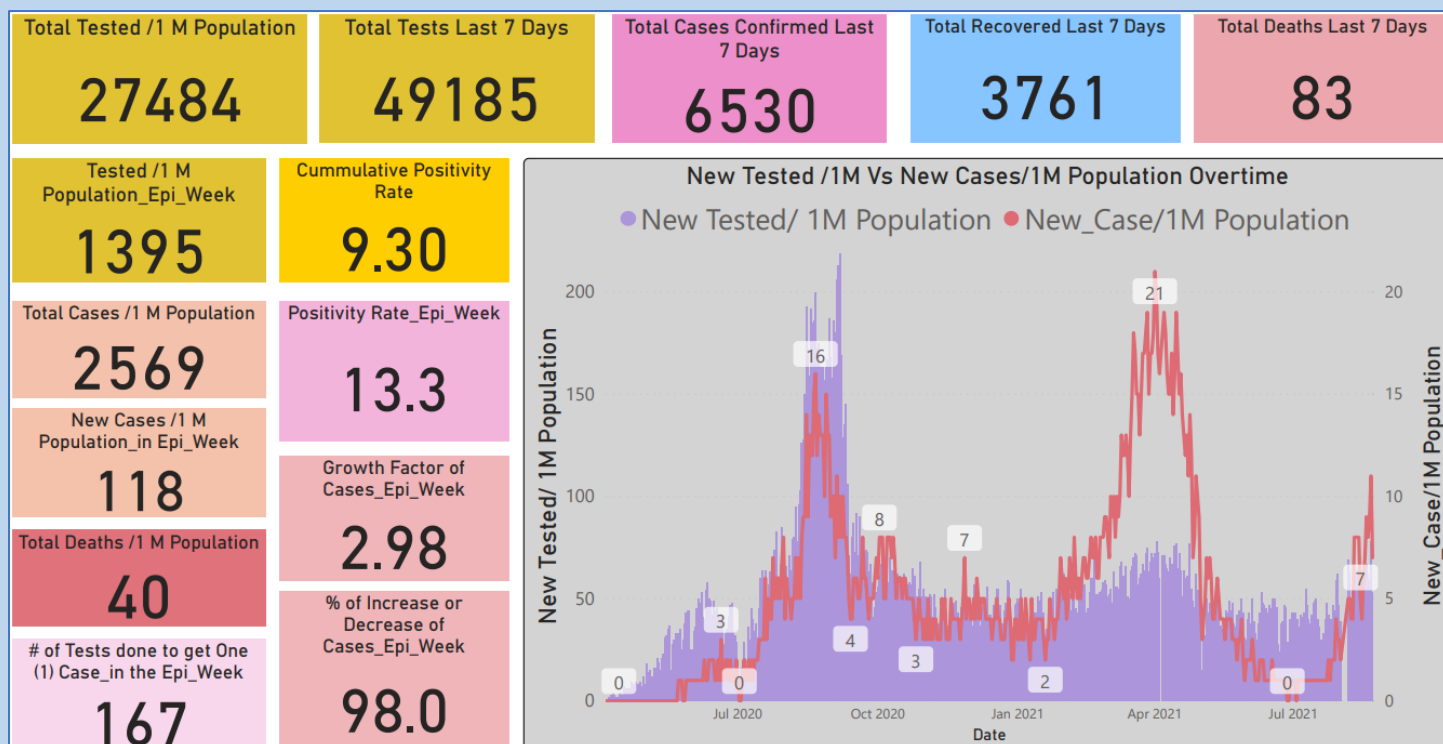


Figure 6: Summary of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Ethiopia as of August 22, 2021.

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 22, 2021:
 - A total of 381,740 contacts of confirmed cases have been identified. Of these, 1,900 contacts were identified in the Epi-Week-33.
 - Of total contacts, 336,516 (88.15%) 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 being conducted in other regions.
- Overall, 43,058 (11.27%) of the contacts (symptomatic plus asymptomatic) have been tested positive.
- Contacts of the confirmed cases contributed for the 14.57% 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.

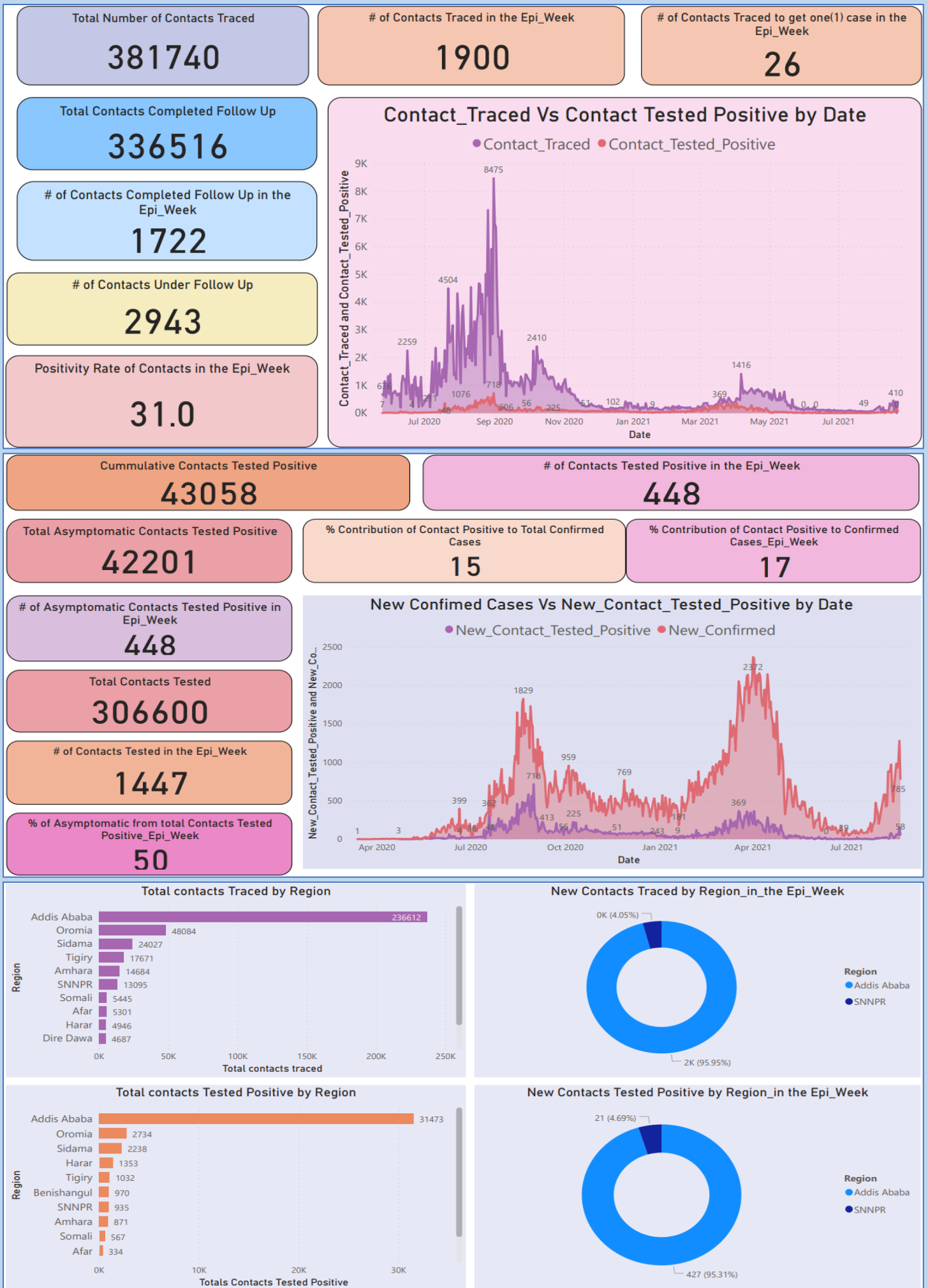


Figure 7: Summary of COVID-19 contact tracing as of August 22, 2021, Ethiopia.

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 22, 2021:
 - 392,890 rumors/alerts have been received and investigated. Of these, 44,998 rumors were reported in the Epi-Week-33.
 - 279,089 (71.03%) of the rumors/alerts have fulfilled the suspected case definition.
- 95,744 COVID-19 related calls are received through call centers in this Epi-week.

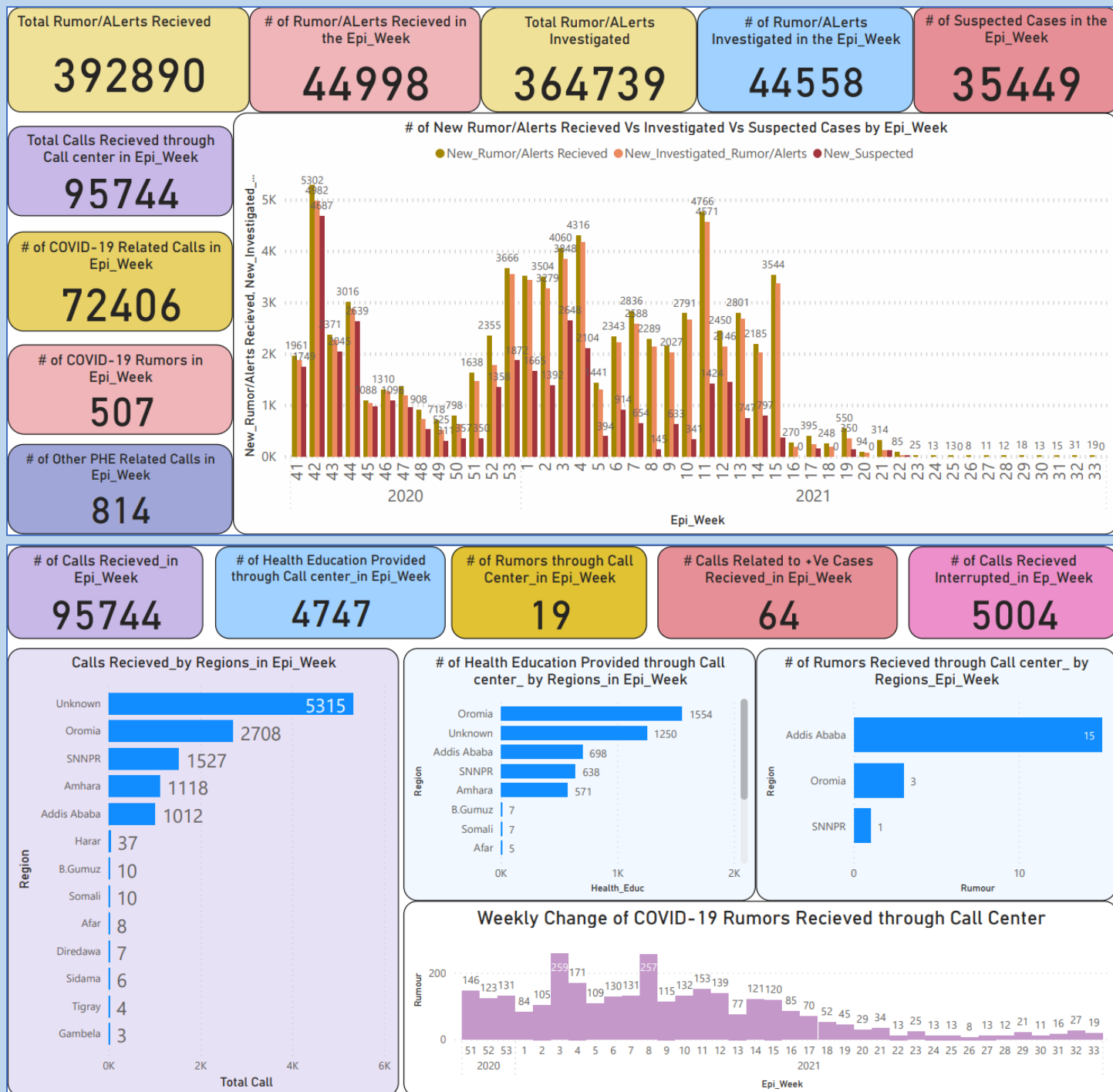


Figure 8: Summary of COVID-19 rumor/alert investigation as of August 22, 2021, Ethiopia.

iii. Point of entry and Quarantine related activities

- Since the start of the outbreak, 2,573,577 passengers have been screened at the Point of Entries of Ethiopia and 793,772 (31%) of them were screened at Bole International Airport.
- Of the total passengers screened, 29,362 were screened for COVID-19 in the Epi-Week-33.
- As of August 22, 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 22, 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-33. 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 22, 2021.

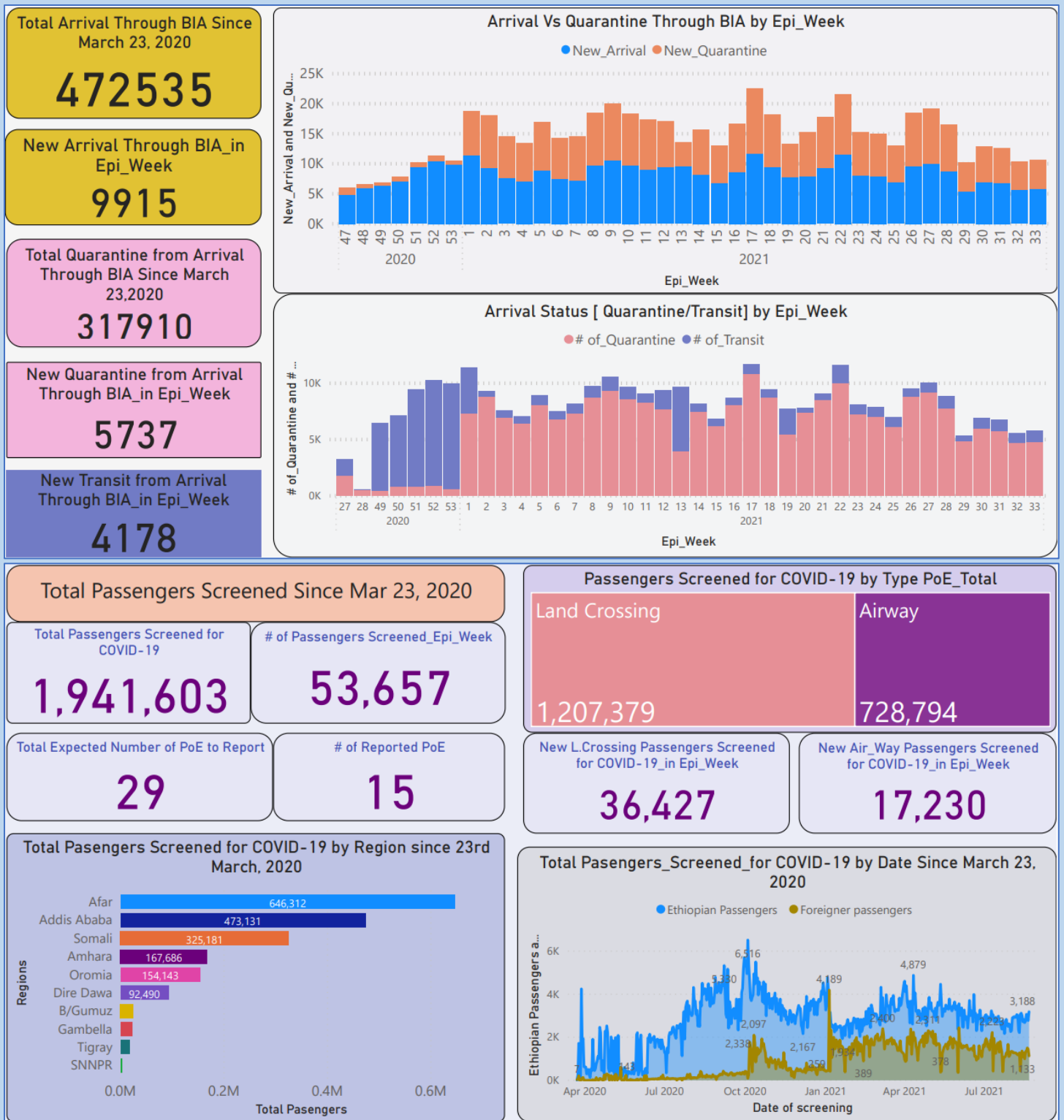


Figure 9: Summary of Passengers screening for COVID-19 as of August 22, 2021, Ethiopia.

IV. Laboratory related activities

- As of 22 August 2021, a total of 3,164,055 samples have been tested for COVID-19 by laboratories across the country.
- 49,185 laboratory tests were processed during the Epi-Week-33 which is an 8% 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-33 is 13.28%, which is higher than that of the preceding week (11.39%).

- Addis Ababa city administration, Sidama, Amhara and Oromia regional states 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.
- 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 153,475 laboratory tests are performed by Ag-RDT among which 10,837 is performed in the Epi-week-33 (figure 10 below).

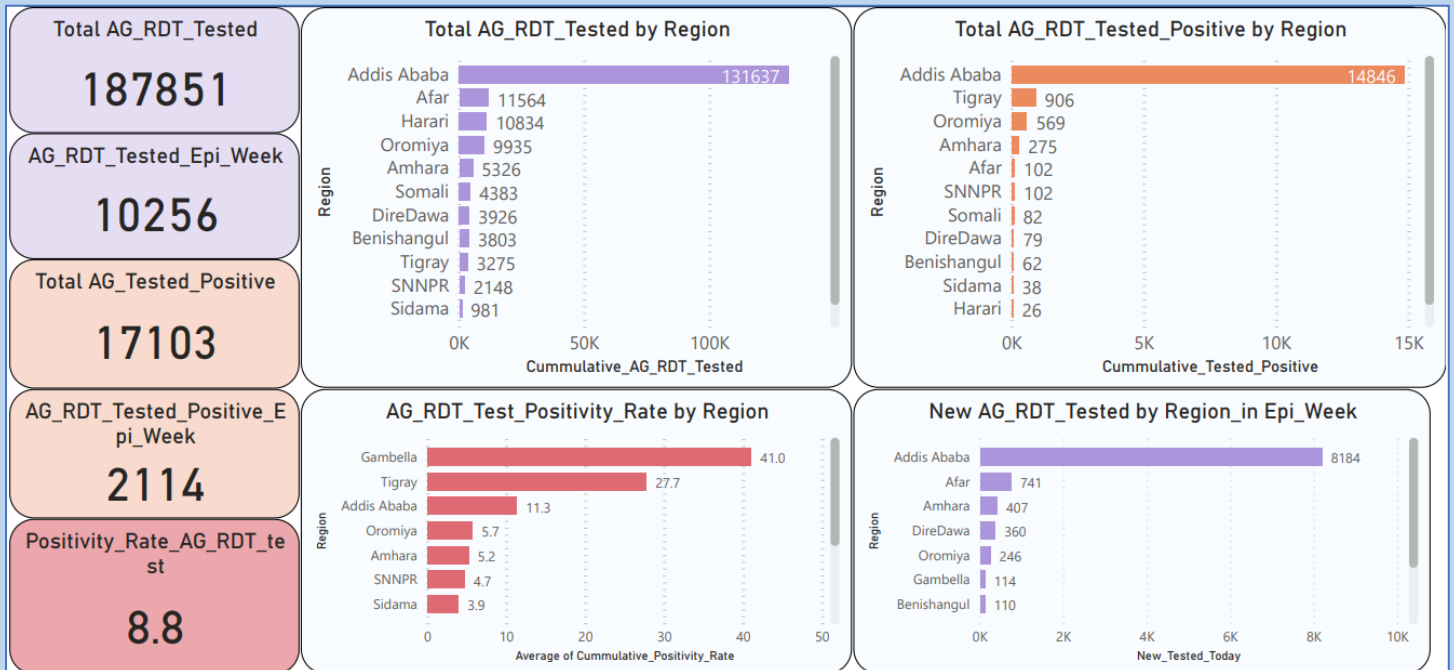
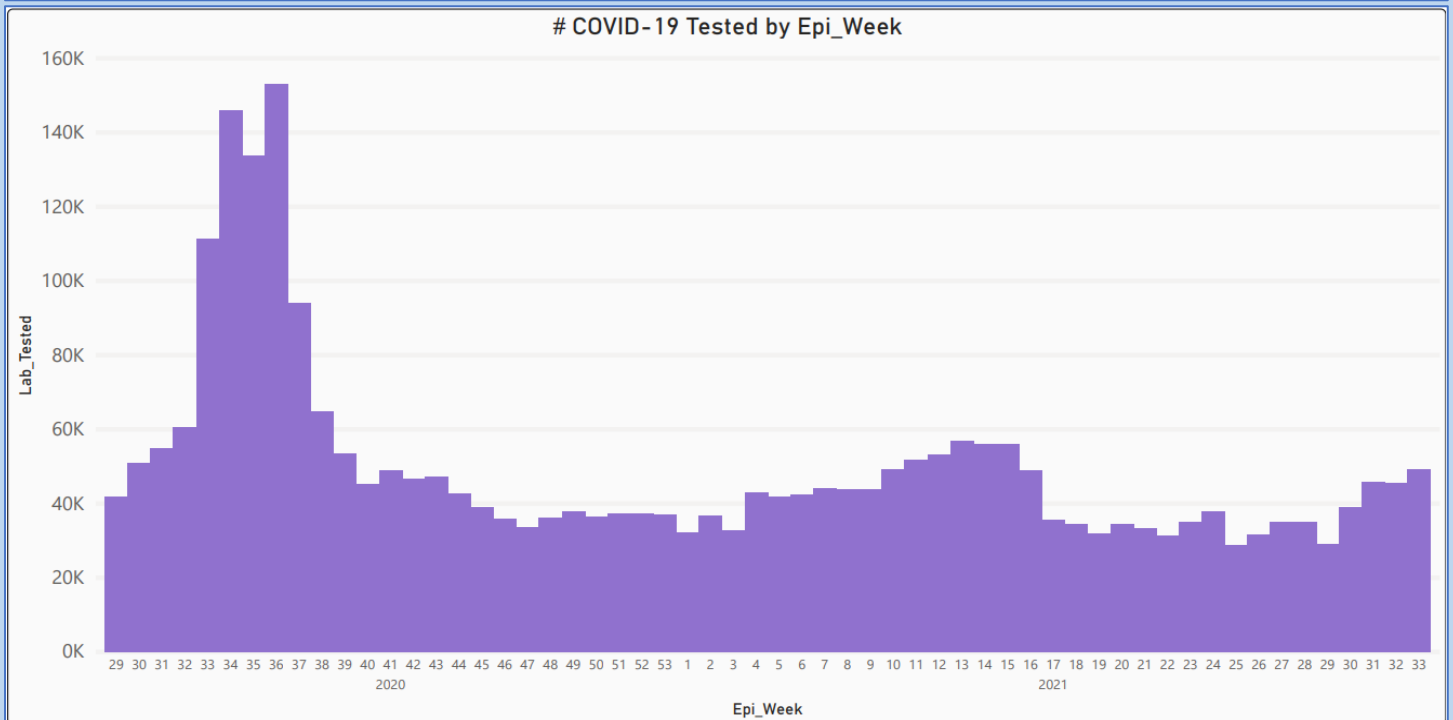
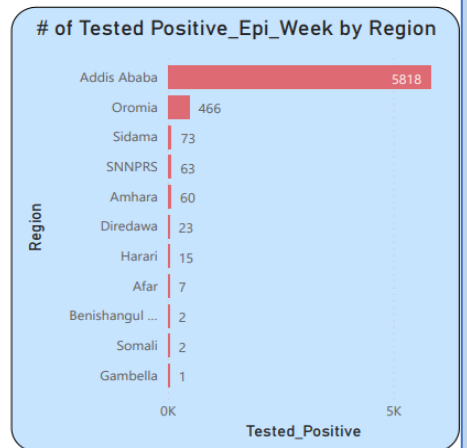
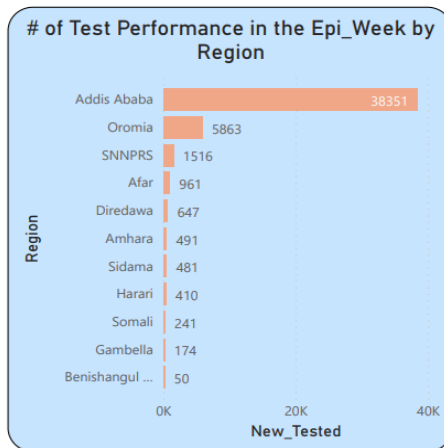
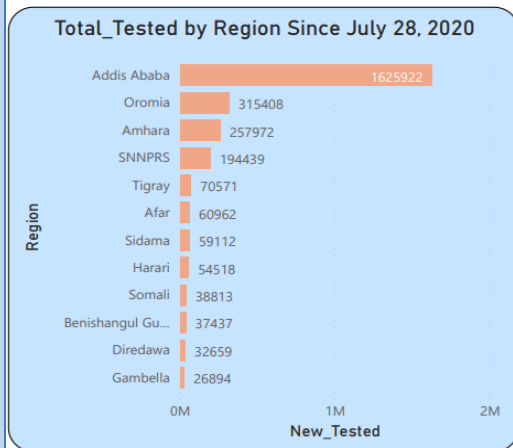


Figure 10: Update on laboratory tests performed by Ag-RDT, as of August 22, 2021

Total Tested 3164055	# of New Tested in the Epi_Week 49185	Total Tested / 1M Population 27484	New Tested / 1M Population of Ep_Week 1395
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Region/City Admn	New_Tested	Tested_Positive	New_Deaths	Positivity_Rate
Addis Ababa	38351	5818	63	15.1
Oromia	5863	466	12	8.0
SNNPRS	1516	63	0	4.6
Afar	961	7	0	0.7
Diredawa	647	23	0	3.3
Amhara	491	60	5	13.8
Sidama	481	73	2	14.3
Harari	410	15	1	5.2
Somali	241	2	0	0.9
Gambella	174	1	0	0.7
Benishangul Gumuz	50	2	0	2.4
Tigray	0	0	0	
Total	49185	6530	83	6.9

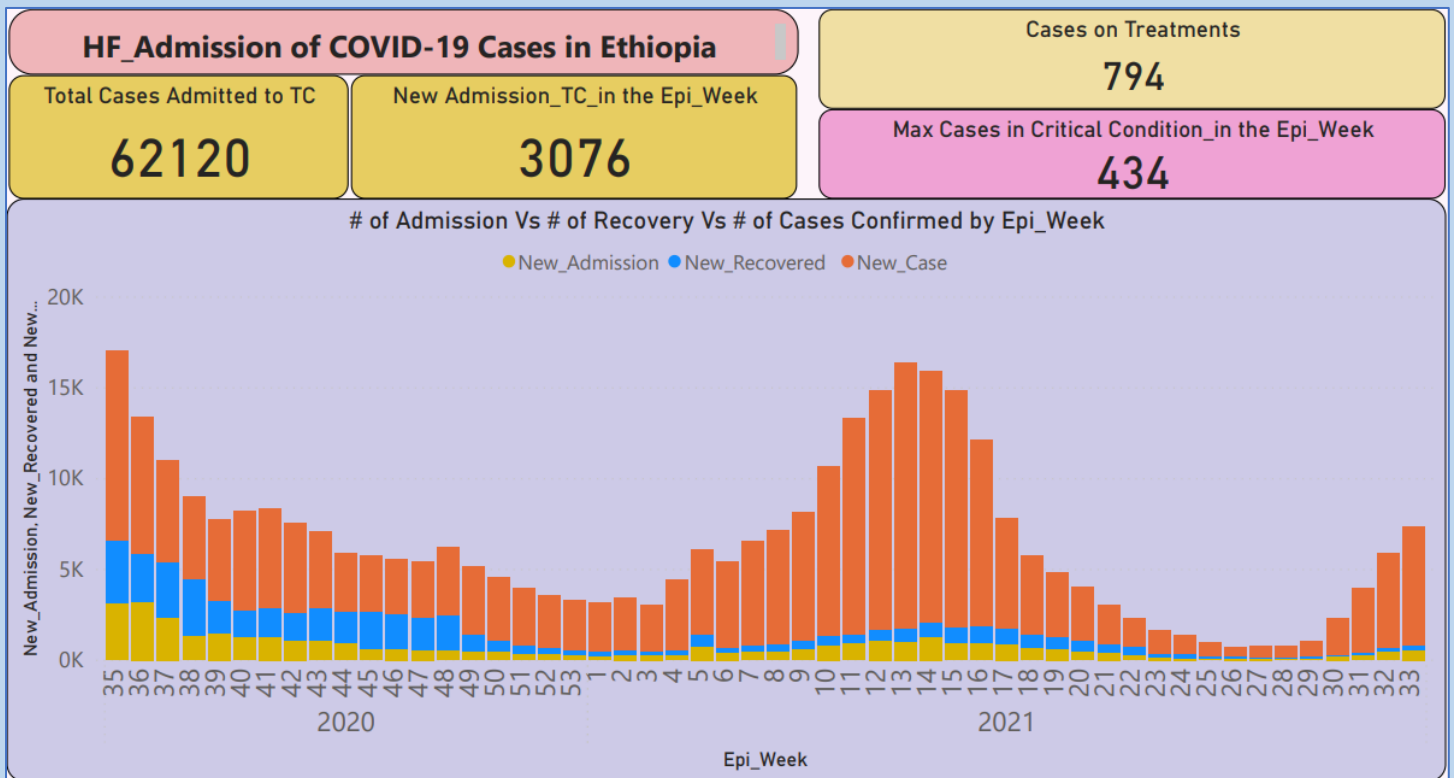
***** Positivity Rate is average of Regional Distn of Rates

Figure 11: Summary of COVID-19 laboratory testing as of March August 22, 2021, Ethiopia.

V. Case Management and Facility Readiness

a. COVID-19 treatment center

- There were total of 3,761 newly recovered COVID-19 cases during the Epi-Week-33, 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 91%.
- The number of cases in severe condition has begun increasing for the last four consecutive weeks. On August 22, 2021, there are 484 cases in severe condition which is higher than the maximum number of daily cases in severe conditions in the previous week (388).



HF=Health Facilities TC=Treatment Center

Figure 12: Summary of COVID-19 cases in Health Facilities/Treatment centers, as of August 22, 2021.

Table 2: Summary of COVID-19 cases at treatment centers as of August 22, 2021

Regions	Total_Case	New_Case	Total_Admission	New_Admission	Total_Death	Total_Recovered	On_Treatment	Critical_Case
Addis Ababa	197120	718	31405	57	2625	27140	680	434
Oromia	40510	40	7389	10	545	6812	55	37
Amhara	12125	4	4606	2	983	4314	17	8
SNNPR	9209	6	4430	1	152	4296	19	2
Sidama	8560	13	3459	2	163	3219	16	1
Tigray	8171	0	5290	0	59	5222	0	0
Dire Dawa	5349	2	1189	0	68	1116	3	0
Harari	4372	1	1281	0	153	1123	1	1
Benishangul	3576	0	899	0	19	876	1	1
Afar	2759	1	826	0	10	812	0	0
Somali	2519	0	664	0	58	601	2	0
Gambella	1534	0	682	0	8	649	0	0

b. Home Based Isolation and Care (HBIC):

- So far, 219,479 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been on HBIC. Of them 214,062 (97.53%) have recovered and 37 (0.017%) died.
- Of these, 6,153 cases have been enrolled to HBIC, 3,446 cases have recovered and one case died in the Epi-Week-33.
- As of August 22, 2021, there are 7,240 cases on HBIC.
- So far, 1,819 (99 in the Epi-week-33) of the cases have been transferred from treatment centers to HBIC after improvement.
- So far, 959 (15 in the Epi-week-33) of the cases have been transferred from HBIC to treatment centers for better care.

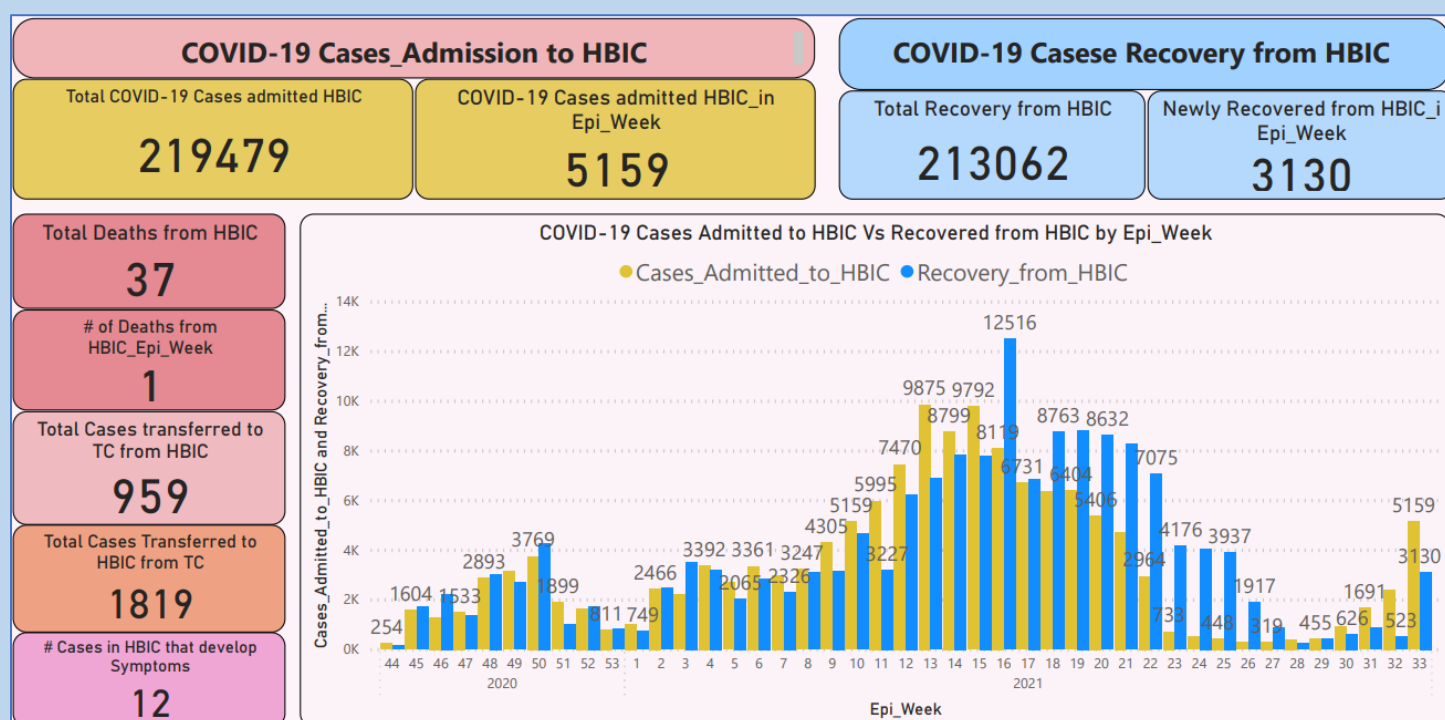


Figure 13: Summary of COVID-19 Home Based Isolation and Care in Ethiopia, as of August 22, 2021.

VI. Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

- Media (mass media and social media) monitoring on COVID-19 related information is ongoing.
- 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.

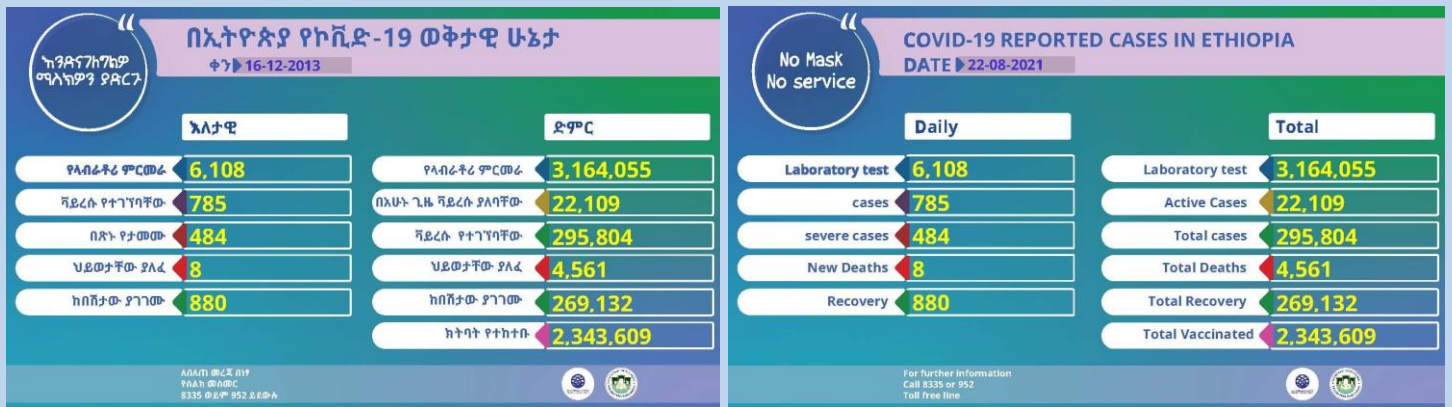


Figure 14: COVID-19 situation update as of August 22, 2021 shared on social media.

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.
- Structural change imposed on COVID-19 response Incident Management System in Ethiopia. The structural change reduced the number of sections under the IMS to five which was initially twelve sections in number. There was also reshuffling on the sections chiefs and Deputy Incident Manager of the COVID-19 pandemic response. The structural change is applicable starting from Epi-week-33.
- The existing directive 30/2020 on COVID-19 prevention and control is repealed by a revised and amended [Directive No. 803/2021](#). It has become necessary to revise and amend the directive enacted on the prohibited activities and duties to be imposed on individuals to prevent and mitigate the impact of COVID-19. Now, therefore, the new Directive is issued by the Ethiopian Public Health Institute in accordance with Article 72 (2) of the Food and Medicine Administration Proclamation No. 1112/2019, Article 55(3) of the Food, Medicine, and Healthcare Administration and Control Proclamation No. 661/2009, and Article 98 of the Council of Ministers Regulation on Food, Medicine, and Healthcare Administration and Control No. 299/2013. The new directive has 11 parts and 37 provisions.

VIII. Challenges and Way Forward

a. Challenges

- Increase in COVID-19 cases associated with Intensive Care Unit beds and Mechanical Ventilators.
- 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

- 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:

- For any individual confirmed to have COVID-19 and who is candidate for Home Based Isolation and Care:
 - 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.eph.gov.et/	8335/952	ephieoc@gmail.com
Ethiopian Public Health Institute COVID-19 Website	https://covid19.eph.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/UCvTzeY-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/Amhara-Healthbureau-682065755146948/	6981	aphieoc@gmail.com
Benishangul Gumuz Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/Benishangul-Gumuz-Health-Bureau-1676282159265517/	6016	bgpheoc@gmail.com
Gambela Regional Health Bureau	https://fb.me/gambellaregionhealthbureau	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/OromiaHealth/	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/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.gov.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 Surveillance Dashboard	https://au.int/en/covid19
WHO COVID-19 daily situation reports	https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports
WHO Academy mobile learning app for health workers, COVID-19 information	Android- https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.who.WHOA Apple- https://apps.apple.com/us/app/who-academy/id1506019873

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Call-Centers
FOR MORE INFO and
ALERT NOTIFICATION on
COVID-19



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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