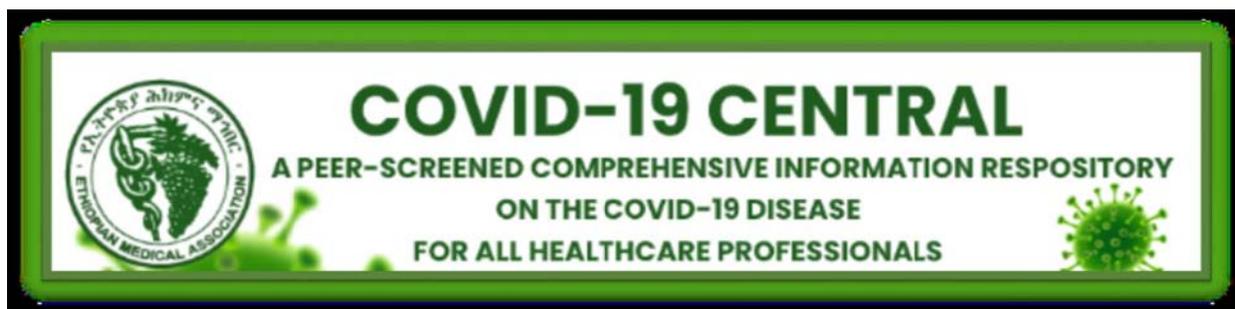


## NEWS/UPDATE



**Ethiopian Health Professionals Advisory Council on the COVID-19 Pandemic in Ethiopia  
in collaboration with the  
Ethiopian Diaspora High-Level Advisory Council on the COVID-19 Pandemic in Ethiopia**

### **ESTABLISHMENT OF A COVID-19 CENTRAL INFORMATION REPOSITORY FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS**

<https://www.ethiopianmedicalass.org>

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Ethiopian Diaspora High-Level Advisory Council on COVID-19 was initiated at the request of H.E. Fitsum Arega, Ambassador of Ethiopia to the United States. The independent Advisory Council is composed of Ethiopian medical and other professionals and has the primary objective of supporting the efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in Ethiopia. It provides policy and technical recommendations based on currently available scientific evidence and experiences learned from around the world. The Ethiopian Health Professionals Advisory Council was initiated by the Federal Ministry of Health of Ethiopia and subsequently the Ethiopian Medical Association (EMA) along with other health professional associations established the local Advisory Council with the same objective as above.

#### **SITUATION**

Within a very short period, the COVID-19 pandemic has become a worldwide crisis. As a novel coronavirus, the medical community had minimal experience with this particular infection. This dearth of knowledge has spurred a flurry of research activities leading to publications in a never before seen numbers and speed. For the very first time publications are being circulated in early formats before any formal online or print process to accelerate the sharing of new scientific information. Furthermore, most of the journals have made COVID-19 publications freely downloadable. In addition to the scientific publications' epidemiological reports from multitude of sources are appearing in real-time. Guidelines and recommendations regarding COVID-19 are generated by institutions as well as local, regional, state, federal and international agencies at a high rate and frequently revised.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The volume of information on COVID-19 on the internet is staggering. The word "COVID 19" generated in Google 5.8 billion entries on 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2020. As a comparison the word "Ebola" garnered only 43 million entries. On the same day, the top central resource for scientific medical publications, PubMed, showed 23,464 publications on COVID-19 since January 2020 i.e. within less than 6 months. To the contrary, over the past 43 years there are only 43,926 publications on Ebola listed in PubMed. These numbers do clearly demonstrate that it can be very daunting to navigate through the myriad of scientific and non-scientific information on COVID-19.

## ASSESSMENT

Until now in Ethiopia there was no authoritative local resource of comprehensive information on COVID-19 specifically designed to support health care professionals. As medical knowledge on this new pandemic is rapidly evolving and cannot be gained from existing textbooks it is imperative to provide a central, well-organized, easily accessible source of information with peer-selected clinical, research and educational materials that will support the Ethiopian health care professionals in their various tasks in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic. In light of the abundance of COVID-19 information out there, it was planned to develop a targeted and well organized comprehensive medical information source for the health care professionals. There is also an increased need for management protocols contextualized for the Ethiopian use. To that effect, both the Ethiopian and the Diaspora COVID-19 Advisory Councils are collaborating and developing specific protocols addressing local issues.

## RECOMMENDATION

Following the above considerations the recommendation was to establish a local and centralized resource center as a repository for [1] comprehensive and peer-screened information source on COVID-19 as well as [2] COVID-19 oriented diagnostic and treatment protocols contextualized for the local use for health care professionals and [3] the Ethiopian Medical Association (EMA) to host these content on its website. Other professional societies and agencies, including those of all ancillary health services, can establish links on their websites with the EMA one.

## ACTION

The two Advisory Councils went on to establish in collaboration with the EMA the dedicated webpage on their website at <https://www.ethiopianmedicalass.org> with the following points in consideration:

- A. **The resource to be named “COVID-19 CENTRAL – A PEER-SCREENED COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION REPOSITORY ON THE COVID-19 DISEASE FOR ALL HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS”**
- B. **Continuously provide** peer screened online connections, literatures and other information material for the “COVID CENTRAL”.
- C. **Continuously upload** newly developed Ethiopia specific diagnostic and treatment protocols to “COVID CENTRAL”.
- D. **Ensure awareness** of the existence of “COVID CENTRAL” by health care professionals and other stakeholders through different means.
- E. **Track the traffic** through the “COVID CENTRAL” repository and accordingly fine tune the process and content.
- F. **Prepare a pathway for complete takeover** of “COVID CENTRAL” by local stakeholders in due course.

## INAUGURATION



The webpage on the EMA website was officially launched with a webinar on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020. The launching webinar program can be found at the end. The repository is solely focused on COVID-19 with documents relevant for clinical and public health practice in Ethiopia. The resources are organized in 7 categories and 24 sub-categories relevant for COVID-19. Most importantly, the pdfs are directly available and downloading is easy and fast. A search function is also present. Those who screen the documents for uploading, so called “peer-screener”, constitute of 49 health care professionals, 28 from the Ethiopian and 21 from the Diaspora Advisory Councils. The project received financial funding from the People to People (P2P) organization.

## PROGRAM OF THE WEBINAR FOR OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE EMA COVID-19 CENTRAL

<p><b>Introduction</b> Project objective &amp; program outline</p> <p><b>Description</b> The how why and How</p>	<p><b>Kassa Darge, MD, PhD, FSAR</b> <i>Project Lead, COVID-19 Central</i> <i>Member, Ethiopian Diaspora High-Level Advisory Council on CV-19</i> Radiologist-in-Chief &amp; Chair Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Professor of Radiology &amp; Surgery University of Pennsylvania Philadelphia, USA and <i>Hon. Professor of Radiology,</i> <i>Addis Ababa University</i></p>	
<p><b>Opening</b> EMA</p> 	<p><b>Tegbar Yigzaw, MD, MPH, PhD, F</b> AIMER Fellow <i>President, Ethiopian Medical Association</i> <i>Member, Ethiopian Health Professionals Advisory Council on CV-19</i> Chief of Party, USAID Health Workforce Improvement Program</p>	
<p><b>Keynote</b> The need for a reliable local information resource</p> 	<p><b>H. E. Dr. Lia Tadesse, MD, MPA</b> <i>Minister of Health</i></p>	
<p><b>Sponsorship/Support</b></p> 	<p><b>Dr. Enawgaw Mehari, MD</b> President and Founder, People to People [P2P] Chairman, Ethiopian Diaspora High-Level Advisory Council on CV-19 Medical Director-Stroke TriStar Horizon Medical Center Dickson/Nashville Adjunct Clinical Professor of Neurology University of Pikeville Pikeville, USA</p>	
<p><b>Highlights</b></p>	<p><b>Tigist Hailu, MPH</b> Coordinator, COVID-19 Central Clinical Research Program Manager Coordinator, Radiology Global Outreach Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, MPH Teaching Faculty, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA</p>	
<p><b>Live demonstration</b></p>	<p><b>Bekure Ledet, BSc</b> IT, Ethiopian Medical Association</p>	
<p><b>Closing remarks</b></p> 	<p><b>H.E. Fitsum Arega, MA, MBA, PGD</b> Ambassador of Ethiopia to the United States Patron, Ethiopian Diaspora High-Level Advisory Council on CV-19</p>	