Recovery protocol for RT-PCR test positive COVID-19 cases

Background: The previous Ethiopian lab confirmed COVID-19 cases recovery protocol requires two tests done 24 hours apart to be negative, which was done on weekly basis until 21 days for asymptomatic cases from the time of diagnosis and for symptomatic cases from the time of last symptom. If they continue to shade SARS-CoV-2 then after they will be discharged as per the discharge protocol for cases with extended viral shading for home follow up and lab test every week up to the time, they qualify for test-based recovery criteria.

Repeated testing of cases to declare recovery is to prevent transmission after discharge.

This revised recovery protocol is designed in consideration of:

1. The lower risk of transmission after 14 days of first diagnosis in asymptomatic cases and after last symptom for symptomatic cases;
2. The constraint it incurs on PPE use and
3. The saving of test kits.
4. Decreases bed occupancy in treatment and isolation centers as the daily number of cases increases
5. Allows individuals to return to their business as early as possible
6. Minimize the psychosocial impacts of the epidemic

Definition:

Time based recovery: Declaring recovery considering days after the day of lab confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19.

Symptom based recovery: Declaring recovery considering days after being asymptomatic (fever and/or cough) in a patient with lab confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 with moderate, severe or critical illness. If cough is the only symptom judgment should be left for clinician decision.

Test based recovery: Declaring recovery considering two negative lab tests done 24 hours apart in a patient with lab confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19.

Recommendation:

1. Asymptomatic or mild cases will be declared recovered based on time-based recovery criteria; 14 days after the date of first positive lab test.
2. Moderate, severe or critical cases will be declared recovered based on symptom-based recovery criteria; 14 days after being asymptomatic (fever and/or cough) in patients who had lab test confirmed COVID-19. The clinician decides if cough persists.
3. All lab confirmed COVID-19 cases that will join public service without practicing physical distancing because of their profession or service duty (health professionals, military personnel and others) will be declared recovered based on two consecutive negative lab tests done 24 hours apart without waiting for the 14 days' time mark.

Those Cases declared recovered by any of the above criteria will be released from home or facility isolation and further follow up.

