

# COVID-19 CASES IN THE GAZA STRIP

Weekly epidemiological bulletin from (28/03 TO 03/04 2021) AND (04/04 TO 10/04 2021)

DATA SOURCES: MINISTRY OF HEALTH (MOH) DAILY REPORTS ON COVID-19 IN GAZA STRIP

## GENERAL

Reporting Period	Weekly cases		Cumulative
	28-03-2021 03-04-2021	04-04-2021 10-04-2021	accumulative since 23/8/2020
# of samples tested	<b>total</b> 24,973	30,525	489,180
# of positive cases	<b>total</b> 7,508	11,088	81,523
# of closed cases	<b>total</b> 58,701	62,393	
# recovered cases (%closed)	58,071(99%)	61,716 (99%)	
# reported deaths (%closed)	630 (1%)	677 (1%)	
Classification of positive cases by severity*	<b>Mild</b>	7,420	10,930
	<b>Moderate</b>	27	10
	<b>Severe</b>	41	132
	<b>Critical</b>	20	16
Positivity rates (weekly)	<b>total</b>	30.06%	16.7% (total)
	<b>contacts</b>	38.9%	41.1%
	<b>suspect</b>	42.9%	68.3%
	<b>surveillance</b>	3.2%	1.0%

\* The reported classification of positive cases by severity reflects the status at first day of admission at the last day of the reporting week. This classification may change over time according to progression of COVID-19 infection among patients.

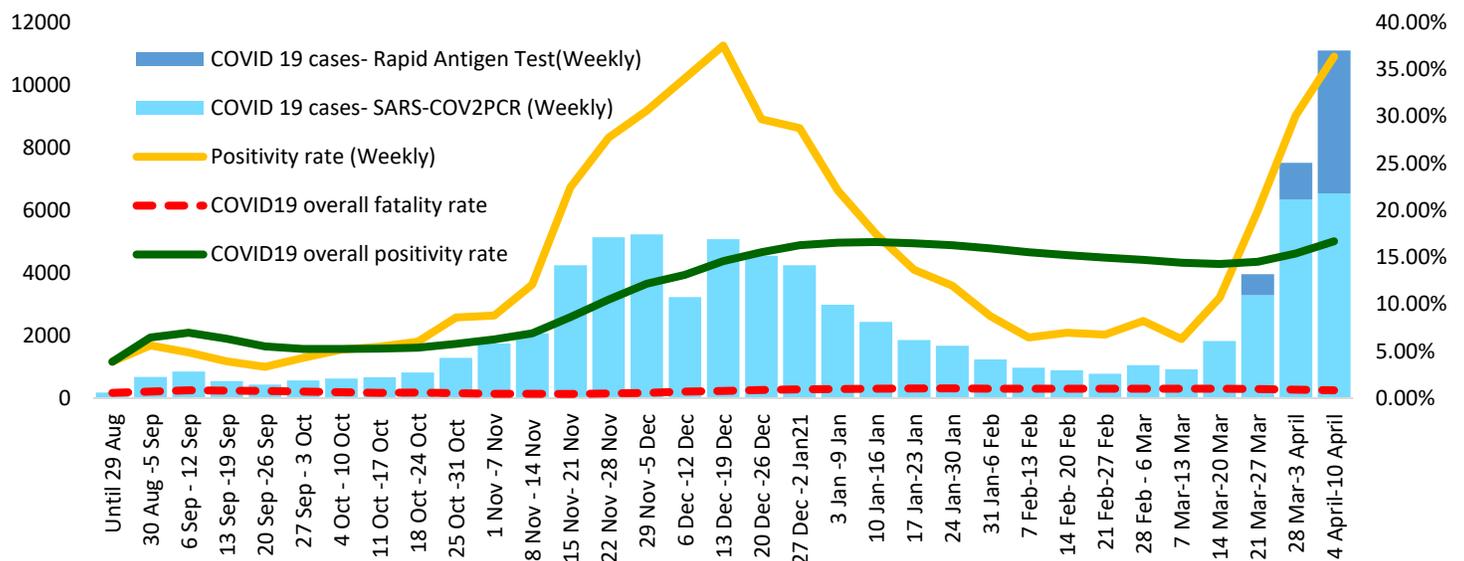


Figure 1: Reported weekly COVID-19 cases, weekly positivity rates, overall positivity rates and overall fatality rates

- Increase in total number of conducted tests to 30,525 between 4-10 April from 24,973 between 28 March-3 April 2021. The total number currently includes the results of COVID-19 antigen rapid test besides SARS-COV2-PCR test (Figure 1).
- Increase in number of newly reported COVID-19 cases to 11,088 between 4-10 April from 7,508 between 28 March-3 April 2021 (Figure 1).
- Increase in newly reported COVID-19 cases and incidence per 100,000 along all five Gaza Strip districts as (Figures 2 and 3).

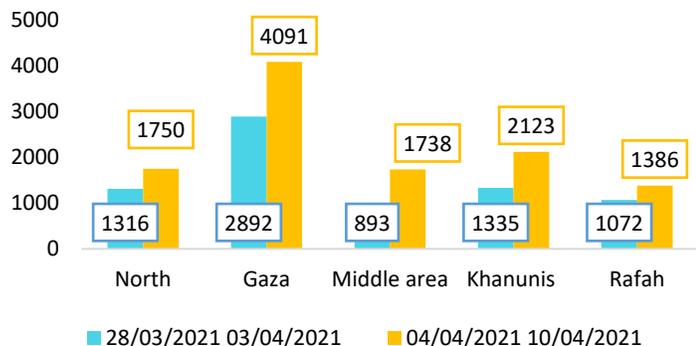


Figure 2: Newly reported weekly COVID-19 cases in Gaza Strip districts

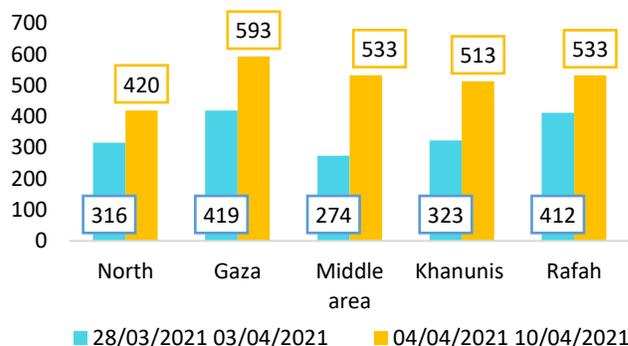
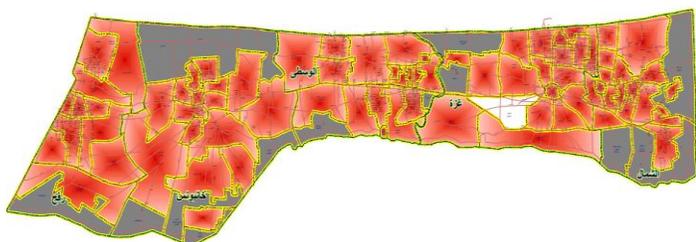
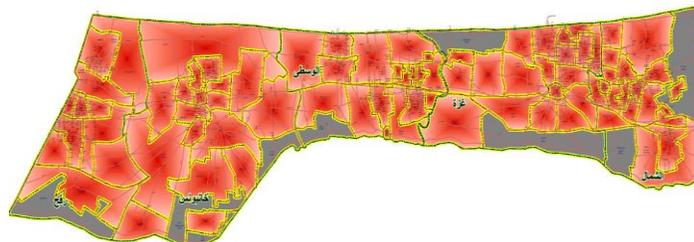


Figure 3: Incidence of weekly COVID-19 reported cases per 100,000 population in Gaza Strip districts

- All Gaza Strip areas are coded red on 9 April 2021 (Figure 4).



2 April 2021



9 April 2021

Figure 4: Geographical distribution of newly reported COVID-19 cases (7 days average) in Gaza Strip neighborhoods

## POSITIVITY RATES

- Increase in weekly COVID-19 positivity rate to 36.3% between 4-10 April from 30.06% between 28 March-3 April 2021.
- Increase in weekly positivity rate along all five Gaza Strip districts (Figure 5)
- Increase in weekly positivity rates among suspected cases and contacts comparing between the two weeks (Table on page 1).
- Increase in overall positivity rate up to 16.7% on 10 April 2021.

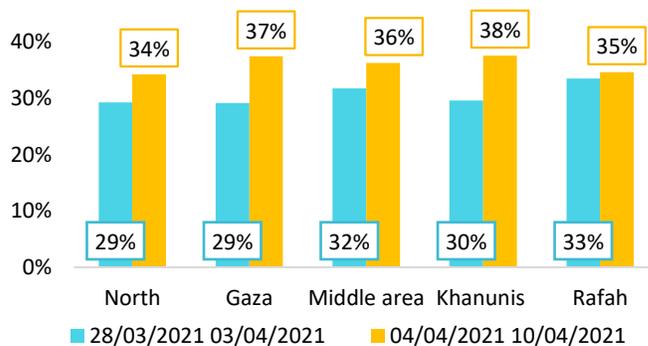


Figure 5: COVID-19 weekly positivity rates distributed by districts

## DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 CASES AMONG AGE GROUPS AND GENDER

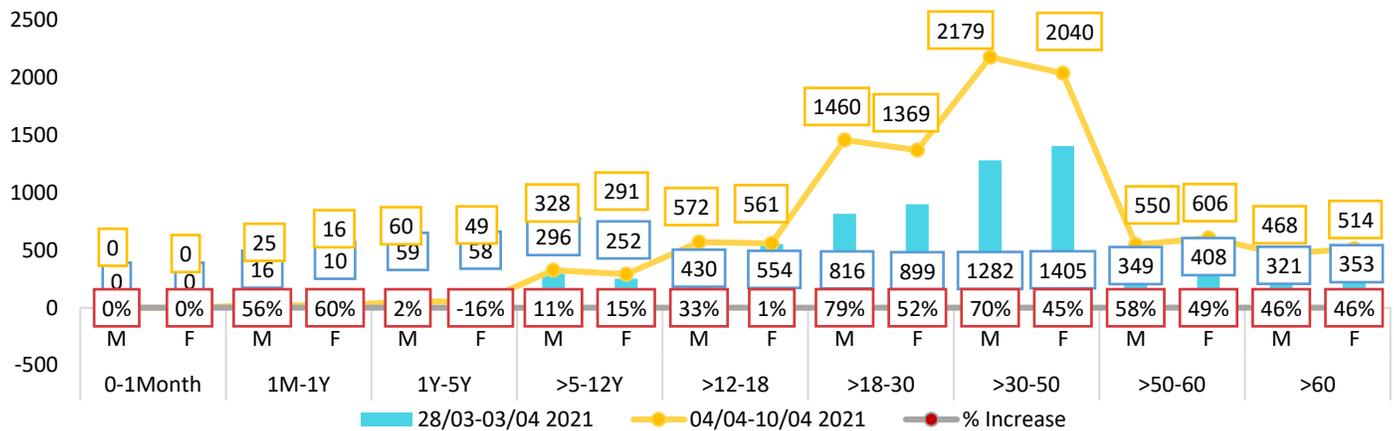


Figure 6: Weekly newly reported COVID-19 cases distributed by age groups and gender

- Increase in number of cases among all age groups between 4-10 April 2021 compared to 28 March-3 April 2021.
- Highest reported COVID-19 cases among people aged 18 to 50 among males and females in the two reporting periods.
- Decrease in average percentage of increase in newly reported COVID-19 cases decreased from the last report, with 79% increase in the number of cases reported among males aged between 18-30 years between 3 and 10 April, compared to 90% increase between 27 March and 3 April 2021.

## DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 DEATHS

- Increase in number of reported COVID-19 deaths to 47 deaths (33 males, 14 females) between 4-10 April 2021 compared to 31 between 28 March-3 April 2021 (Figure 7).
- Majority of reported COVID-19 deaths are from people aged 60 years and older (Figure 7). 28 male and 8 female deaths were reported in the period between 4-10 April 2021 in comparison with 15 male deaths and 6 female deaths in the period from 28 March-3 April 2021.
- Seven deaths among younger age groups (>30-50) reported between 4-10 April 2021 compared to 5 deaths in the period between 28 March -3 April 2021.
- Total reported deaths since the start of COVID-19 outbreak in the Gaza Strip until 10 April reached 677 with an accumulative COVID-19 fatality rate of 1%. Out of the 677 COVID-19 reported deaths, 395 were males (58%) and 282 were females (42%).

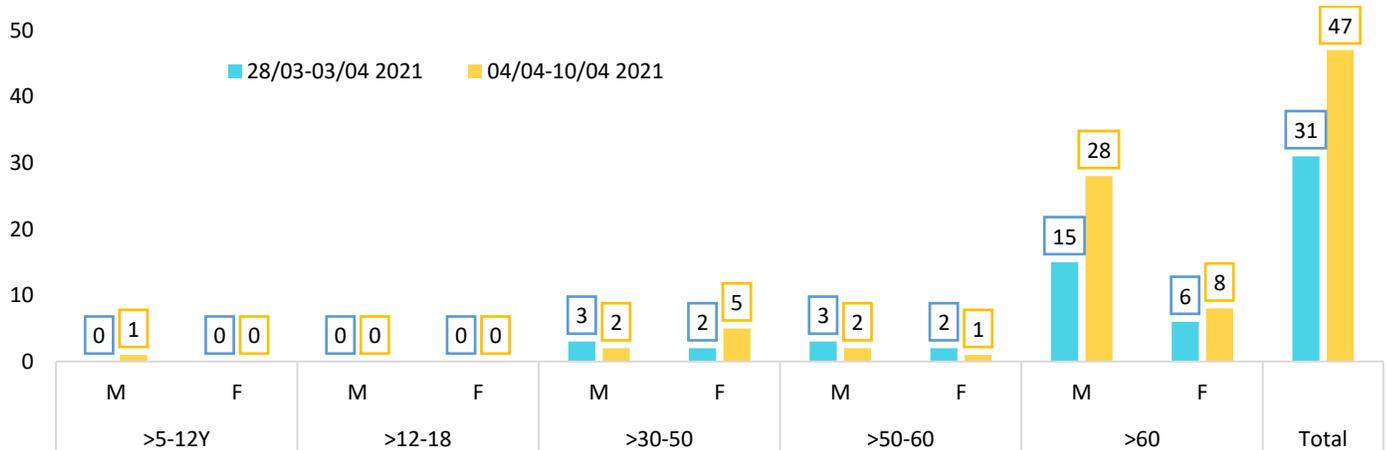


Figure 7: Distribution of reported COVID-19 deaths by age groups and gender

## DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 CASES BY SEVERITY

- Increase in cumulative moderate cases admitted to hospitals to 77 on 10 April compared to 66 cases on 3 April 2021 (Figure 8).
- Increase in cumulative severe cases admitted to hospitals to 223 cases on 10 April compared to 124 cases on 3 April 2021 (Figure 8).
- in cumulative critical cases admitted to hospitals increased to 51 cases on 10 April compared to 42 cases on 3 April 2021.

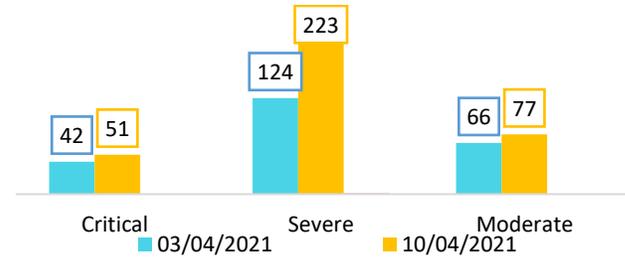


Figure 8: Classification of cumulative hospital admitted COVID-19 patients by severity

## HEALTH SYSTEM CAPACITY (COVID-19 MANAGEMENT)

- Increase in COVID-19 bed occupancy rate to 77% on 10 April from 55% on 3 April 2021 based on a total of 501 COVID-19 beds including 238 high dependency and 61 ICU beds. (Figure 9).
- Increase in occupancy rate at high dependency and ICU units to 92% on 10 April compared to 56% on 3 April 2021 (Figure 9).

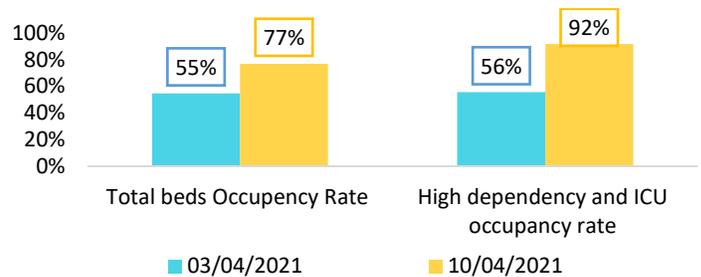


Figure 9: Occupancy rates of COVID-19 beds classified by type of bed

## HEALTH CARE WORKERS INFECTIONS

- Increase in total number of active COVID-19 cases among health workers to 502 on 10 April from 244 on 3 April 2021. The increase is among all health workforce both among males and females (Figure 10).
- Increase in newly reported COVID-19 infection among health workforce highly to 346 between 4-10 April compared to 156 between 31 March-3 April 2021 (Figure 11).
- Around 60% of the newly infected workers between 4-10 April were working at hospitals (Figure 11).

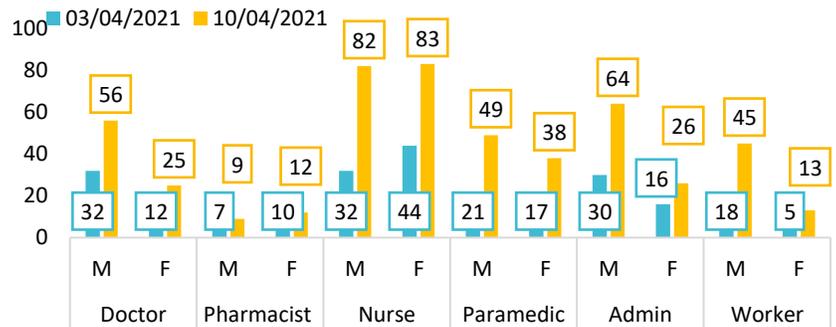


Figure 10: Active reported COVID-19 cases among health workforce distributed by gender and profession

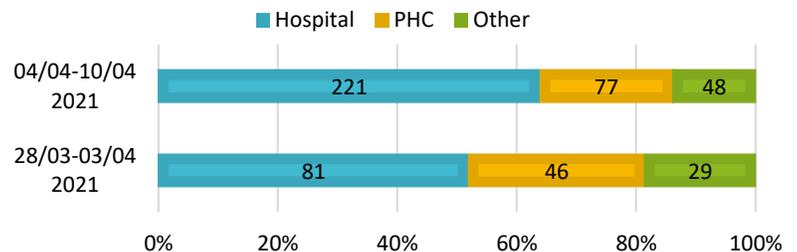


Figure 11: Distribution of newly weekly reported COVID-19 cases among health workforce by work setting

## COVID-19 VACCINATION

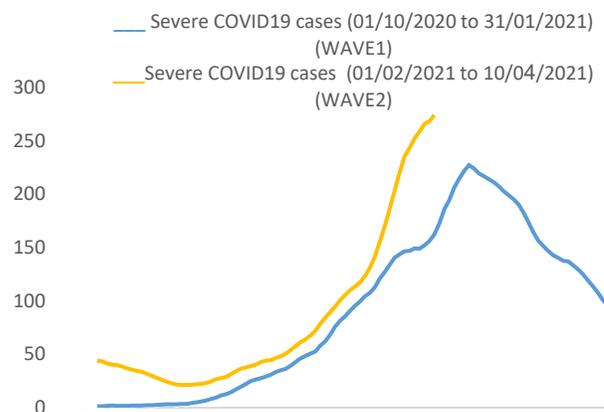
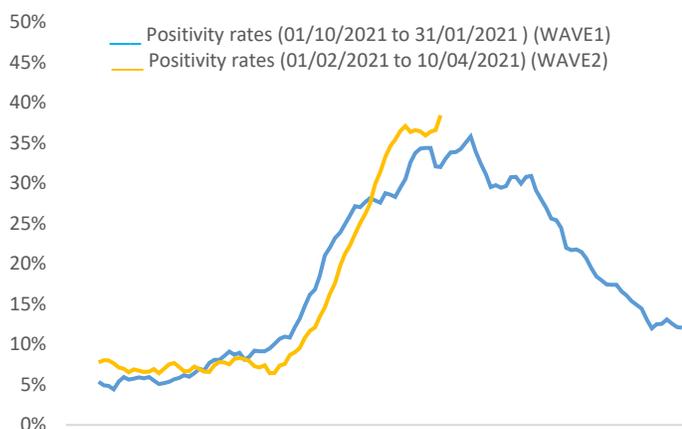
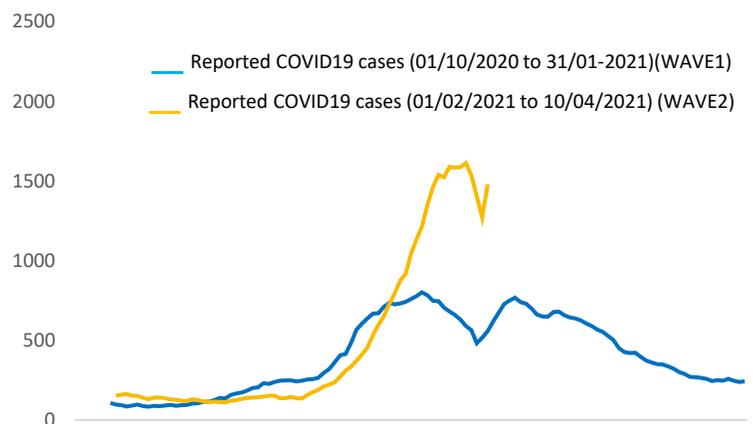
- National vaccination campaign was launched in Gaza Strip on 22 February 2021 in parallel with established specific vaccine distribution criteria for elders with chronic health conditions, frontline health care workers and other patients with life-threatening health conditions.

No	Date	Vaccine route	Delivered vaccine Doses
1	February 2021	Palestinian Authority	2,000
2	February 2021	Donations from UAE	20,000
3	11 March 2021	Donations from UAE	38,700
4	21 March 2021	COVAX	11,700 + 9600

- The table on the right illustrates delivered vaccine doses. The first shipment of COVAX vaccines reached Gaza Strip on 21 March and the next anticipated shipment is end April 2021.
- Up to 10 April 2021, 31,245 frontline health workers and community members received the first dose of COVID-19 vaccinations (1,915 at 10 MOH hospitals, 14,258 at 10 PHC clinics, 15,072 at 7 UNRWA clinics), with 11,480 receiving their second dose of vaccine (5,644 at MOH, 5,836 at UNRWA clinics).

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF COVID-19 TRANSMISSION WAVES

- When comparing the number of reported COVID-19 cases, positivity rates and admission of severe cases in first wave of COVID-19 community transmission (1 October 2020-31 January 2021) with the second wave (1 February-10 April 2021 and ongoing), the second wave is seeing a steeper increase in newly reported cases and severe COVID-19 cases admitted to hospitals, after seemingly following the same pattern at first.
- This shows the urgent need for the reinstatement of public health interventions to prevent further community transmission. In addition, MOH capacity should be prepared to respond to the new wave of COVID-19 cases and apply lessons learned from the previous period.



## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase in total newly reported COVID-19 cases and weekly positivity rates between 28 March-3 April 2021 among both males and females and all age groups along five Gaza Strip districts. Almost all Gaza areas are coded red reflecting the wide range of COVID-19 community transmission at this stage.
- Alarming increase in total admitted COVID-19 patients in severe condition, in high dependency and ICU bed occupancy rates, as well as in reported COVID-19 deaths.
- Protection of the most vulnerable COVID-19 patients such as elderly and patients with known co-morbidities remains vital. The process of early hospital admission for these groups should be enforced to provide early supportive care to prevent the deterioration of their health conditions and late access to lifesaving care.
- Supporting health care system for proper management of COVID-19 patients and all patients is essential at this stage to prevent further deterioration of situation.
- Alarming increase in reported COVID-19 infections among health workers during the last five weeks. Further enforcement of IPC measures at health facilities levels is needed, joined with extensive awareness campaigns among health workers to further encourage COVID-19 vaccine uptake.
- MOH declared new preventive measures, with closure of kindergartens, schools, universities, and wedding halls, prevention of transportation movement during weekends, and mass gatherings such as funerals. Further reinstatement of public health interventions to reduce exposure among population is urgently needed.
- Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) messaging on public health measures among the broader population need to be urgently stepped up to prevent further deterioration in COVID-19 figures and resurgence of cases considering the easing of restrictions and the witnessed low compliance with safety measures at the community level.
- Strengthening of RCCE efforts to address vaccine hesitancy among the population and raise awareness of the urgency to get vaccinated including for those previously infected by COVID-19 in view of the unknown duration of immunity and the risk of re-infection