

# IN THE LOOP



## TOP NEWS OF THE QUARTER!

### IN THIS ISSUE

### TOP NEWS OF THE QUARTER

### MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

### OUR SERVICES

### NATIONAL EPILEPSY WEEK

### THE WELLBEING OF OUR PATIENTS

- Call for Strategic Support: To advance our mission, we need charity sector expertise to help develop an international strategy and gain partners for our work.
- National Epilepsy Week: Our annual celebration was held from February 12-27, 2024.
- Education Initiatives: We are enhancing epilepsy education by placing advocates in schools and hosting joint teaching sessions for students and teachers.
- Training Healthcare Professionals: During Epilepsy Week in Adama, we conducted training for nurses and health officers, involving participants from various regions.
- Massive success in raising epilepsy awareness through our recent campaign, featured on major TV and radio stations!
- CPD Accreditation is underway to motivate nursing staff for epilepsy management training.
- New Staff: We welcomed two new staff members, Dr. Hana Mulugeta and Dr. Bezawit Ketma, to our team.

# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Dear CareEpilepsy Ethiopia Community,

Welcome to our 1st Quarter Newsletter of 2024, a platform where we connect and celebrate our shared achievements and the incredible work being done to support those living with epilepsy. This quarter has been marked by notable progress in our mission to save lives and transform perceptions.

A special highlight this quarter was the return of our awareness-raising walk, which had not been held for the past four years due to COVID-19 and other restrictions. The walk was a tremendous success, drawing attention to our cause and bringing our community together in a powerful display of solidarity and support.

Our annual celebration of National Epilepsy Week took place from February 12-27, 2024. Through a collaborative effort involving the Ministry of Health, CareEpilepsy Ethiopia, WHO, and the Association of Ethiopian Neurologists, along with the support of sponsors, we were able to deliver a program that addressed critical aspects of epilepsy care and education. This event provided an invaluable opportunity to educate the public, healthcare professionals, and policymakers about epilepsy. The theme, "End the Stigma of Epilepsy," resonated deeply with our community, bolstered by the participation of distinguished guests from international NGOs such as the International Medical Corps, Amref, Project Hope, CDC, and Parkinson's Association. Mainstream media coverage on TV and radio further amplified our message, helping us reach a broader audience.

We are thrilled to report that the ROW Foundation generously donated Keppra (levetiracetam) and lamotrigine, which are crucial in our ongoing efforts to provide essential medications to those in need. Additionally, we have strengthened our epilepsy-at-school education initiatives by placing advocates in schools and hosting joint teaching sessions for students and teachers. Our training programs for healthcare professionals, including a recent session in Adama, equipped nurses and health officers with the skills necessary to manage epilepsy effectively.

Expanding our outreach and partnerships continues to be a priority. Our network of partner organizations, including the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE), WHO, the Ministry of Health, and other stakeholders, is growing, strengthening our advocacy efforts and policy influence. This expansion is a testament to the collaborative spirit and dedication of our team, volunteers, and supporters. We are also excited to welcome two new staff members to our team, Dr. Hana Mulugeta and Dr. Bezawit Ketma, whose expertise will undoubtedly enhance our capacity to deliver high-quality care and support.

We have reached a crucial point in developing our mission where additional support for our fundraising initiatives is essential. Without prompt financial support, our ability to provide essential care and support to those living with epilepsy is at serious risk. Your assistance, whether through direct [financial support](#) or guidance on potential funding sources, would be invaluable and deeply appreciated.

I am also seeking to develop an international donor strategy and would greatly benefit from working closely with someone experienced in the charity sector. If this opportunity interests you, or if you know a family member or friend who might be willing to help, please get in touch with me on WhatsApp at +447598817212.

Thank you for being an essential part of our journey. Your ongoing support is the cornerstone of our progress and determination. Let's continue to save lives and change perceptions, one step at a time.

With gratitude,

Enat Yewnetu  
CEO, CareEpilepsy Ethiopia

# NEUROLOGISTS AND NURSES AT THE FOREFRONT: PROVIDING EXPERT CARE TO PATIENTS



In the First quarter of 2024, we are excited to share our significant accomplishments:

- **Emergency Medication and Financial Support:** We provided emergency anti-epileptic medication and financial assistance for purchasing medication to 241 patients. Additionally, medical insurance was secured for 35 patients.
- **Referral and Continuity of Care:** Twenty individuals living with epilepsy were referred to their nearest health centers to utilize government services, ensuring continuity of care.



### The best business innovation in the digital era for millennials

**Essential Epilepsy Care:** We provided essential epilepsy care to 61 children and extended care to 70 adult patients. Additionally, 102 patients visited our nurse-led epilepsy and health assessment clinic.



**Generous Medication Donations:** We received crucial medications, Lamotrigine and Levetiracetam, from our donor, ROW Foundation.

**Home Monitoring Service:** 910 patients benefited from regular nurse-led home check-ins, where their seizure status was monitored and personalized management advice was provided.



**EEG and MRI Services:** We offered EEG services to 33 individuals with epilepsy and provided MRI access to 19 individuals.

**Transportation Support:** We supported 470 patients by covering their transportation costs, ensuring they could attend clinic appointments and patient support group meetings.

**Volunteer Surge and Clinical Support:** We have seen a significant increase in doctors volunteering, boosting our training and clinical support. Sixteen volunteer neurologists and five volunteer psychiatrists participated in our clinic and EEG reading sessions.

## OUR IMPACT: WELLBEING INITIATIVES

Let's take a glimpse into the vibrant tapestry of activities that unfolded during the first quarter, all geared towards nurturing the wellbeing of our cherished patients at CareEpilepsy Ethiopia:

At CareEpilepsy Ethiopia, we understand the importance of holistic wellbeing which encompasses more than just physical health. Therefore, we provide mental health support, nutritional guidance, physical fitness programs, community engagement, and educational training for holistic wellbeing.

### Group Therapy



### Patient Support Group Meeting



### Women's Counseling Program



- Telephone Helpline: 630 patients received vital information and advice, helping them navigate their epilepsy-related concerns and enhance their understanding.
- Coffee and Chat Morning: 225 individuals enjoyed our weekly sessions, connecting with peers and participating in craftwork, fostering creativity and reducing stress.
- Patient Support Group Meetings: 470 patients and families attended monthly meetings, providing a supportive space for sharing experiences and mutual encouragement.
- Counseling Service: 67 individuals accessed our professional counseling, addressing emotional and psychological challenges, and learning effective stress management techniques.

At CareEpilepsy Ethiopia, we are immensely proud of these wellbeing initiatives. They represent a holistic approach to supporting individuals with epilepsy, making a significant positive impact on their lives. Through comprehensive support and community engagement, we are transforming the lives of people with epilepsy in Ethiopia, driving meaningful change, and fostering a brighter future for our patients.

# NATIONAL EPILEPSY WEEK

## Background



The 9th Ethiopian National Epilepsy Week, held from February 13th to 17th, 2024, was the highlight of our program, filled with inspiring stories and community spirit. This annual initiative not only raised epilepsy awareness but also provided essential training for care providers, empowering them with the skills to diagnose and treat epilepsy more effectively. We saw health workers passionately engaging in workshops and seminars, eager to make a difference.

The campaign also resonated deeply with the public, spreading crucial information and fostering empathy for those living with epilepsy.



Our advocacy for policy reforms aimed to better address their needs, giving a voice to many who had felt unheard. Our efforts were in perfect harmony with the Intersectoral Global Action Plan on Epilepsy and Other Neurological Disorders 2022-2030, striving to improve access to treatment, enhance the quality of life for people with neurological disorders and their families, and promote brain health across the lifespan. This week was a powerful reminder of what we can achieve together, united by a common cause.



# EPILEPSY IN THE MEDIA

Epilepsy in the Media: Massive success in raising epilepsy awareness through our recent campaign, featured on major TV and radio stations!



**Dr. Dereje Duguma, Minister of Health (above center)**

Dr. Dereje Duguma's address highlighted the Ministry of Health's commitment to improving epilepsy care and raising awareness across Ethiopia. By prioritizing collaboration with CareEpilepsy Ethiopia in training and implementing targeted awareness campaigns, the government aims to enhance support for individuals living with epilepsy and foster a more inclusive healthcare environment. The Ministry has been actively focusing on epilepsy, improving services, and training healthcare workers to effectively diagnose and treat the condition.



**Dr Hiwot Solomon  
Lead Executive Officer of Disease  
Prevention and Control  
(above on the left)**

Dr. Hiwot Solomon highlighted her Directorate's commitment to improving epilepsy care services under the Mental Health Directorate. Recognizing the need, this year, we organized a joint program in epilepsy management training for nurses and teachers, underscoring the Ministry of Health's dedication to sharing expertise and resources. This meaningful partnership aims to significantly impact the lives of individuals living with epilepsy and enhance their overall well-being.



**Enat Yewnetu  
CareEpilepsy Ethiopia Founder and Director**

Enat Yewnetu shared her excitement about the week-long event, designed to enhance awareness about epilepsy, offer support to those affected, and promote collaboration among stakeholders. She spoke passionately about how the week will kick off with a series of educational workshops and training sessions, specially tailored for healthcare professionals and educators. Enat also highlighted plans for awareness-raising walk, inviting the community to join in learning about epilepsy and fighting the stigma surrounding it.

## WORKSHOP ON THE 12TH FEBRUARY 2024

Dr. Hiwot Solomon underscored the Ministry of Health's dedication to enhancing epilepsy care services and amplifying awareness efforts across Ethiopia.

Dr. Helina discussed childhood epilepsy and its educational impact. Following that, Sr. Meron led an interactive seizure first aid and safety session, offering practical insights and guidance.

Dr. Beza from the Ethiopian Public Health Institute emphasized that her organization views epilepsy as a public health concern and is dedicated to collaborating with CareEpilepsy on additional research and training initiatives.

Furthermore, Enat Yewnetu showcased CareEpilepsy's impactful initiatives, illustrating the tangible outcomes of CareEpilepsy's work in supporting individuals with epilepsy. The session was enriched by compelling patient stories, offering insights into the lived experiences of those affected by epilepsy.



## NATIONAL EPILEPSY WEEK SCHOOL CAMPAIGN

The National Epilepsy Week school campaign 2024 was a resounding success, achieving its objectives of raising awareness about epilepsy and empowering students with essential first aid skills. By engaging directly with schools, the campaign played a crucial role in promoting inclusivity and understanding within the community. Moving forward, efforts will continue to build on this momentum, ensuring that individuals living with epilepsy receive the support and respect they deserve.





## OUR IMPACT ON CLINICAL TRAINING AND EPILEPSY AWARENESS

### Clinical Training, 13th - 14th February 2024

The National Epilepsy Week Clinical Training Program in Adama was a resounding success with 70 attendees from across Ethiopia, including General Practitioners, Health Officers, and nurses. Organized by the Ministry of Health, CareEpilepsy Ethiopia, and the Association of Ethiopian Neurologists, the two-day event empowered healthcare professionals with skills in epilepsy management, from diagnosis to psychosocial care.

Day 1 of the training program, held on February 13th, 2024, began with a warm welcome from Agitu Tadesse of the Ministry of Health, setting the tone for a day rich with invaluable insights into epilepsy. Enat Yewnetu, Director of CareEpilepsy Ethiopia, alongside Dr. Helina and representatives from the Association of Ethiopian Neurologists, outlined the training objectives, creating an atmosphere of collaboration and shared purpose.

The morning session started with Dr. Helina and Dr. Desalegen's overview of epilepsy, followed by Dr. Behailu and Dr. Desalegen on antiepileptic medication management. It ended with Dr. Behailu and Dr. Helina's tailored care strategies for pediatric epilepsy patients.

In the afternoon, the focus turned to the psychosocial aspects of epilepsy. Dr. Kibrom and Dr. Gadissa discussed stigma, mental health, and quality of life, while Dr. Gadissa also covered managing seizure emergencies. Enat Yewnetu highlighted the social burden of epilepsy and CareEpilepsy Ethiopia's proactive measures.

On February 14th, 2024, Day 2 focused on women's epilepsy issues. Dr. Gadissa and Dr. Mehila discussed epilepsy management during pregnancy, followed by a panel on epilepsy in pregnancy and elderly patients. In the afternoon, Enat Yewnetu and Sr. Meron led hands-on sessions on seizure first aid, while Dr. Etsegenet Tizazu covered care for epilepsy and HIV co-occurrence. The day was filled with interactive learning and skill-building.

We also trained 52 teachers, educated 1,550 students, and reached 255 employees at various workplaces. These efforts significantly enhanced epilepsy awareness and care, contributing to a more informed and supportive community.

These achievements underscore our commitment to saving the lives of those affected by epilepsy and transforming perceptions and we take immense pride in the progress made during the first quarter.





# EPILEPSY FOUNDATION TRAINING FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS AT ADAMA ON 17TH FEBRUARY 2024



One of CareEpilepsy Ethiopia's key initiatives is the Epilepsy Smart Schools Initiative, which strives to create a supportive and inclusive environment for children with epilepsy in schools. In Ethiopia, when a child starts having seizures, the first reaction is often to remove them from school. That's why we take training teachers seriously to support children with epilepsy.

This year's impactful training was held on February 17th, 2024. Led by Dr. Kindu Woldemichael and the dedicated CareEpilepsy staff, the training aimed to empower teachers with comprehensive knowledge of epilepsy management, helping children with epilepsy return to education. Participants gained insights into the causes, diagnosis, and psychosocial aspects of epilepsy, along with practical skills like seizure first aid. They also learned about the significant family burdens associated with epilepsy. This event underscored our commitment to training teachers about epilepsy, ensuring that every child can thrive in their educational journey.

### THE WALK – 25TH FEBRUARY 2024

On Sunday, February 25th, 2024, as part of the National Epilepsy Week program, a spirited awareness-raising walk was held, marking a significant stride in our mission to raise awareness about epilepsy. Starting from Tewodros Avenue and culminating at the Ethio-Cuba Friendship Memorial Park on Churchill Avenue, the walk symbolized unity and determination to eradicate the stigma associated with epilepsy in our community. Adding to the vibrant atmosphere, the Federal Marshal Band accompanied our journey with uplifting melodies, amplifying the sense of camaraderie.



Notably, representatives from the Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as people affected by epilepsy, graced our event. With approximately 100 enthusiastic participants, our walk resonated with a shared commitment to raising awareness and fostering solidarity in the fight against the stigma of epilepsy.



## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Clinical and Teachers Training Program 2024 in Adama, marked a significant milestone in advancing epilepsy care and support both in clinical and education setting. With a comprehensive agenda and hands-on sessions, the training equipped healthcare professionals and educators with essential knowledge and skills to effectively manage epilepsy.

The collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Health, CareEpilepsy Ethiopia, and the Association of Ethiopian Neurologists, along with the support of sponsors, ensured the success of this initiative. As participants return to their respective roles, they carry with them not only enhanced expertise but also a renewed commitment to providing compassionate and inclusive care to individuals living with epilepsy. The ripple effects of this training are poised to contribute positively to the epilepsy care landscape in Ethiopia and beyond.



*Building a stigma-free society. One step at a time.*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## »»» SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

We are honored to extend special thanks to our partner organizations, including the Ministry of Health and the Association of Ethiopian Neurologists, for their invaluable collaboration.

Furthermore, CareEpilepsy Ethiopia extends heartfelt gratitude to all our sponsors, including the Ethiopian Public Health Institute, the World Health Organization, the International Medical Corps, Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, Woudase Diagnostic Service, Friends of CareEpilepsy in Atlanta, and all our dedicated volunteers. Your support has been instrumental in making National Epilepsy Week 2024 a resounding success.

Thank you for your dedicated commitment to our cause and for helping us make a difference in the lives of those affected by epilepsy.

CareEpilepsy works with the most marginalised children, women and men who face barriers to getting the education and employment they deserve. At CareEpilepsy, we believe in the power of the individual and of a group of thoughtful, committed people to change the lives of people with epilepsy; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. Together we can save lives. Together we can change the perception of epilepsy. Together we can make a difference.

There are many ways to support us: become a member, volunteer your time, become a corporate partner and donate.

**SAVING LIVES IS  
BETTER TOGETHER!**

**DONATE**

## »»» WAYS TO SUPPORT US

Give online

<https://www.careepilepsyethiopia.org/donate>

**Ethiopia**

CareEpilepsy Ethiopia  
Account Number: 1000161849166  
COMMERCIAL BANK OF ETHIOPIA

"You might wonder why I want you to spread epilepsy awareness when you don't have epilepsy. At one point, neither did I."

**HELP SPREAD EPILEPSY  
AWARENESS.**

(Credit: Epilepsy Action)



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