

# Crisis Communications Response: CrowdStrike

May 19, 2025

OHA Annual Meeting

# Speakers

## **Kelly Calhoun, MSM, APR** **Vice President, Communications**

Kelly leads Communications at Cincinnati Children's, where she oversees Culture Communications, Public Relations and Creative Services. She has spent nearly three decades in escalating roles in both marketing and communications, advancing and protecting brands across the entire spectrum of healthcare.

## **Nanette Bentley** **Sr. Director, Public Relations**

Nanette leads Public Relations for Cincinnati Children's, where she's responsible for media relations, social media and patient/family communications. Over her 30+ years in communications, she's been a journalist, photo agency bureau chief and PR professional in the technology and healthcare industries.

# Disclaimer

Kelly Calhoun and Nanette Bentley have no real or perceived conflicts of interest that relate to this presentation.

# Friday, July 19, 2024 at 3:15 am



Your PC ran into a problem and needs to restart. We're just collecting some error info, and then we'll restart for you.

85% complete

For more information about this issue and possible fixes, visit our website.

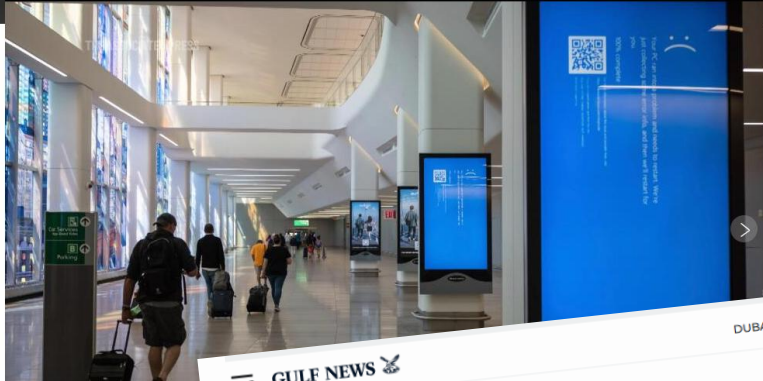
If you call a support person, give them this info:

Stop code: 0x00000000



# Period of Uncertainty

## A massive tech outage is causing worldwide disruptions. Here's what we know



### BUSINESS

Business / Aviation

## Microsoft outages: London exchange joins banks, airlines reporting technical issues

Large-scale outage across the world wrought havoc, rendered IT systems useless



## Tecnología

MICROSOFT >

## Un apagón informático masivo tumba servicios esenciales e infraestructuras críticas por todo el mundo

El problema, que ha afectado desde aeropuertos a hospitales, surgió de una actualización en un antivirus de la firma de ciberseguridad CrowdStrike que bloquea el sistema Windows

## NEWS

## Global IT chaos persists as Crowdstrike boss admits outage could take time to fix

19 July 2024



# It Begins...



Calhoun, Kelly 7/19/2024 3:55 AM

## Systems Down Issue

I'm the COC and am on an urgent leadership call regarding various systems down. Will provide updates here. CenterLink is not working. We may need to use social to communicate. EPIC is down.

# Communication Strategy & Goals



## Crisis Communication Playbook

CINCINNATI CHILDREN'S

- Minimize disruption and impact by providing clear, timely and accurate communications to **patients and families** and **employees**
- Protect and advance the reputation of Cincinnati Children's



# Early Response



Calhoun, Kelly 7/19/2024 4:31 AM

Two media inquiries so far. Working on RAVE notice now.



Calhoun, Kelly 7/19/2024 4:46 AM

Sent media response to Fox19 and WCPO at 4:46am

"We have a number of Microsoft-based systems that are affected; however, we are using our standard back-up processes to ensure patient care is uninterrupted."



# Formal Statement Development



Calhoun, Kelly 7/19/2024 6:39 AM

FINAL WEBSITE AND SOCIAL STATEMENT - PLEASE SEND: Many of our Microsoft-based computer systems have been affected by the worldwide technology outage. Our teams are working hard to minimize disruption to patient care and system operations, and we are bringing systems back up as quickly as possible.

- Surgery patients for all locations are asked to arrive at their scheduled time; however, delays are likely and families are encouraged to plan accordingly.
  - If you have questions about your surgery, contact 513-636-4517 (Burnet Campus) or 513-803-9820 (Liberty).
- Radiology / imaging patient appointments will remain as scheduled; however, delays are likely and families are encouraged to plan accordingly.
- All other non-surgical clinic and office appointments before 10:00 a.m. are canceled. Our teams will contact patients to reschedule.
- The Schubert Research Clinic is closed until 10:00 a.m.
- Our urgent care and emergency departments remain open.

We will post updates on these channels.



# Communication Dissemination

- All area media
- Telephone operators
- Access center and family relations team
- Affiliated physicians
- Board
- Government relations
- Community relations
- Development team
- Website
- Facility digital signage
- Organization's social media channels

**Important Updates  
Regarding Patient  
Appointments**

# Communication Dissemination

Cincinnati Children's Connect - Special Edition

July 19, 2024

# Connect



## Microsoft Outage Disrupting Operations

Many of our Microsoft-based computer systems have been affected by the worldwide technology outage. Teams are working hard to bring systems back up as quickly as possible and to minimize disruption to patient care and system operations.

Employees should use downtime procedures and escalate questions or concerns to their area leader.

Please note the following:

- Surgery patients for all locations are asked to arrive at their scheduled time; however, delays are likely and families are encouraged to plan accordingly.
- Radiology / imaging patient appointments will remain as scheduled; however, delays are likely and families are encouraged to plan accordingly.
- All other non-surgical clinic and office appointments before 10 am are canceled. Our teams will contact patients to reschedule.
- The Schubert Research Clinic is closed until 10 am.
- Our urgent care and emergency departments remain open.

We will share additional updates as needed.

Cincinnati Children's Connect - Special Edition

July 19, 2024

# Connect



## Outage Update as of 10:15 am

Thank you to everyone for your patience, dedication and teamwork as we navigate this challenge as One Cincinnati Children's.

The IS Service Desk and Call Center are experiencing a high volume of employee calls.

- Please only call the Service Desk at 513-636-4100 if you require access to Epic and are receiving a message that you are blocked by Citrix. Please expect delays.
- The main Call Center lines to our various locations should be kept open to address questions from our patients and families. Please do not call this number for other needs.

We recognize that many individual laptops and computers are displaying a recovery screen message, or employees are otherwise unable to access all applications and files. Please do not call the Service Desk if you are experiencing these issues as we are prioritize clinical care operations. Instead, escalate this issue to your area leadership. We will address non-clinical operations and provide further updates once all clinical care support systems are restored.

**For Lab & Radiology:** if you are able to use/access EPIC, do so. For STAT or urgent needs, consider a follow up phone call.

**For Pharmacy:** The pharmacy is no longer using downtime procedures. The tube system will be back online soon.

We will share additional updates as needed. Again, thank you for your patience and incredible teamwork!

# Ongoing Communication

**Update:**  
**All appointments**  
**after 10 a.m.**  
**are on as scheduled**



**Cincinnati Children's**

Published by Bryce Anslinger



July 19, 2024 · 🌐

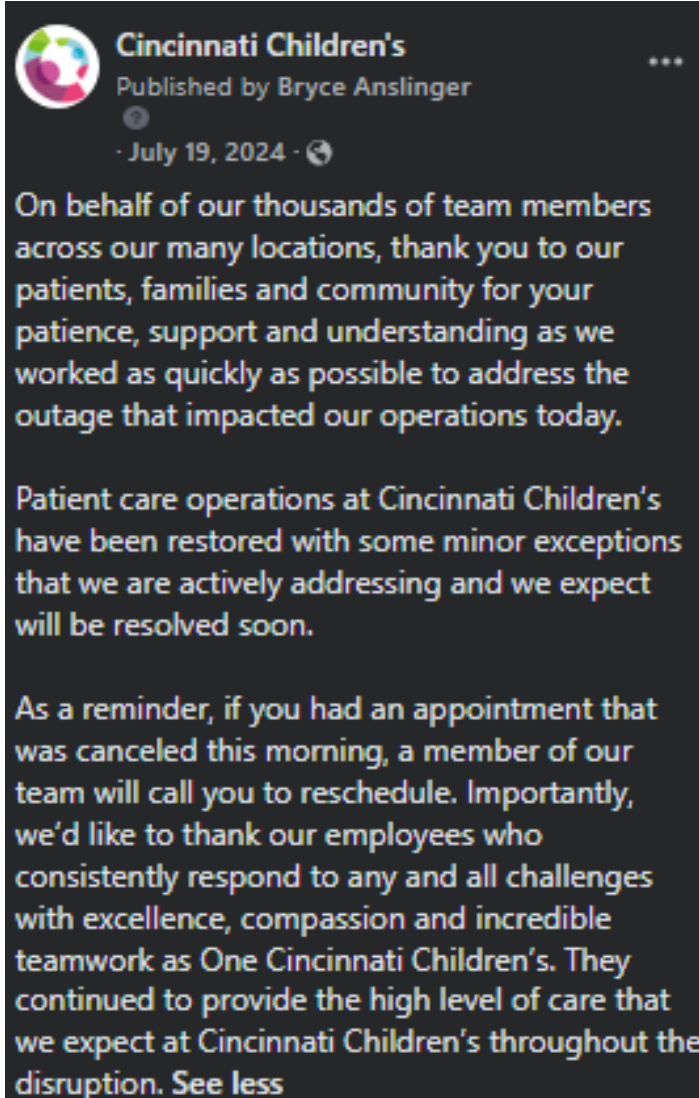


All appointments will resume as normal beginning at 10:00 a.m. as previously communicated. We ask for your patience as our teams are continuing to work as quickly as possible to restore all computer systems and functions across all locations; however, delays may still occur and should be planned for whenever possible.

Also, please note that our phones are very busy. If you had an appointment that was canceled this morning, a member of our team will call you to reschedule.

# Ongoing Communication

Thank You!



**Cincinnati Children's**  
Published by Bryce Anslinger  
· July 19, 2024 · 🌐

On behalf of our thousands of team members across our many locations, thank you to our patients, families and community for your patience, support and understanding as we worked as quickly as possible to address the outage that impacted our operations today.

Patient care operations at Cincinnati Children's have been restored with some minor exceptions that we are actively addressing and we expect will be resolved soon.

As a reminder, if you had an appointment that was canceled this morning, a member of our team will call you to reschedule. Importantly, we'd like to thank our employees who consistently respond to any and all challenges with excellence, compassion and incredible teamwork as One Cincinnati Children's. They continued to provide the high level of care that we expect at Cincinnati Children's throughout the disruption. [See less](#)

We posted the final update at 3:54 pm.



# Ongoing Communication

We updated highly visible alerts on the homepage of our website each time we received new information that impacted our users.

This information closely mirrored what we posted on our social media channels.

## Important Information Regarding Microsoft Outage:

Many of our Microsoft-based computer systems have been affected by the worldwide technology outage. Our teams ✕ are working hard to minimize disruption to patient care and system operations, and we are bringing systems back up as quickly as possible.

- Surgery patients for all locations are asked to arrive at their scheduled time; however, delays are likely and families are encouraged to plan accordingly.
  - If you have questions about your surgery, contact 513-636-4517 (Burnet Campus) or 513-803-9820 (Liberty).
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[SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT](#) [DIRECTIONS](#) [INTERNATIONAL](#) [BILLING](#) [SIGN IN TO MYCHART](#) [WAYS TO HELP](#) [DONATE NOW](#)



[Patients and Family](#) [Healthcare Professionals](#) [Researchers](#) [Search Q](#) [I want to ▼](#)



# Ongoing Communication

## Alert: Technology Outage

We ask for your patience as our teams are continuing to work as quickly as possible to restore all computer systems and functions impacted by the worldwide technology outage. Delays may occur.

Thank you for your understanding!

## Alert: Microsoft Outage

Information Services is continuing to restore computers that the outage impacted.

Computer restoration services are available for all employees at the following locations:  
• Main Campus at Vernon Place, Floor 1, Room 500 on Saturday, 8 am – 8 pm;  
• East Campus on Sunday, 8 am - 6 pm; and Monday, 7 am - 6 pm.

Look for more updates in Connect and in Daily Updates.

# Post-Event Communication



Nick DeCourcy • 2nd

Helping smaller businesses make big changes with AI | Microsof...  
3mo • 🌐

+ Follow ...

Last night, in the midst of the CrowdStrike BSOD debacle, I was at the [Cincinnati Children's ER](#) with my toddler (he's fine apart from a cast on his hand) when computers suddenly started to go offline and refusing to reboot into Windows.

It was quite a sight to see a virtual sea of blue screen errors across the sizeable footprint of the area we were in.

It took only a little time for the staff to fall back on paper processes. There were some things that had to be repeated to ensure they had the data they needed, repeating my son's medical history and allergies, and their team members working around problems like how to access imaging of his hand.

We probably ended up being there longer than would have been the case if the IT systems had not given up mid-visit, we arrived during the night of one day and didn't leave until the morning radio shows had started on the next.

However, when leaving we asked the nurse who had been with us how they were holding up with the technology problems. She surprisingly told us that it had been a good opportunity for their team to come together to meet the challenge and had given them learning and bonding they otherwise would not have had.

: ) Thank You  
Information Services

## Behind-The-Scenes Tech Teams Take Center Stage During Outage Recovery

Updated July 26, 2024 at 9:46 AM

At 6:15 am on Friday, July 19, Information Services put out a call to their team for "all hands" to come in. In true Cincinnati Children's fashion, more than 150 professionals showed up.

The CrowdStrike update deployed earlier that morning had impacted 17,547 out of about 25,000 total Cincinnati Children's devices. Servers were down. Core systems including Epic, PACS and CenterLink were offline. Blue screens greeted employees trying to log in to Windows desktops and laptops for the day. Clinical staff had initiated downtime procedures.

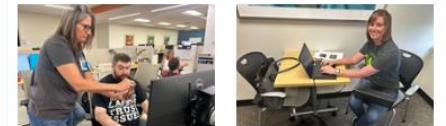
Information Services deployed team members to all clinical areas across our locations. By 5 pm that day, all servers were back up and running and by 8 pm, nearly 15,000 devices had been restored.

"Our team really banded together to deliver for our employees, patients and families—dedicated members from deskside and clinical integration, the server team and so many other IT specialists who normally work on everything else in our department. I am so grateful to everyone who answered the call for help," said **Tony Johnston**, chief information services officer.

IS team members continued recovery efforts the week of July 22, completing rounds on all clinical and office areas on Monday and staffing three drop-in locations to help an estimated 500 employees to get back online. The Service Desk fielded 4,150 calls over 96 hours from Friday to the same timeframe.

... and deserve a big thank you.

... Information Services. "I want to thank Marketing and Communications for their partnership. ... nications to keep everyone informed, so our team could focus on getting things fixed. We are One



# How We Did It

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Teams chat window with the title "Systems Down Issue". The chat history includes the following messages:

- Calhoun, Kelly** 7/19/2024 3:55 AM  
**Systems Down Issue**  
I'm the COC and am on an urgent leadership call regarding various systems down. Will provide updates here. CenterLink is not working. We may need to use social to communicate. EPIC is down.
- Calhoun, Kelly** 7/19/2024 4:31 AM  
Two media inquiries so far. Working on RAVE notice now.
- Calhoun, Kelly** 7/19/2024 4:46 AM  
Sent media response to Fox19 and WCPO at 4:46am  
"We have a number of Microsoft-based systems that are affected; however, we are using our standard back-up processes to ensure patient care is uninterrupted."
- Bentley, Nanette (She/Her/Hers)** 7/19/2024 4:57 AM  
Kelly, how can I help?
- Calhoun, Kelly** 7/19/2024 4:59 AM  
I think I'm ok right now. We have another call at 5AM where we'll decide what to do about outpatient clinic appointments.  
If we cancel appointments, we'll need social and likely a release given that we can't alert patients/families through our normal systems.
- Bentley, Nanette (She/Her/Hers)** 7/19/2024 4:59 AM  
Ok. I am up and available
- Calhoun, Kelly** 7/19/2024 5:02 AM  
We may also need to put something on our website. Will let you all know. We may want to put someone from digital on alert.  
Could you do that, Nanette?
- Bentley, Nanette (She/Her/Hers)** 7/19/2024 5:02 AM  
Yep

At the bottom of the chat window, there is a "Reply" input field and a toolbar with icons for emojis, mentions, attachments, and a send button.



# Results

In addition to receiving positive messages from patients, families, employees and our leadership team thanking us for keeping them informed, we evaluated our success externally and internally.

# Results - Media

## National

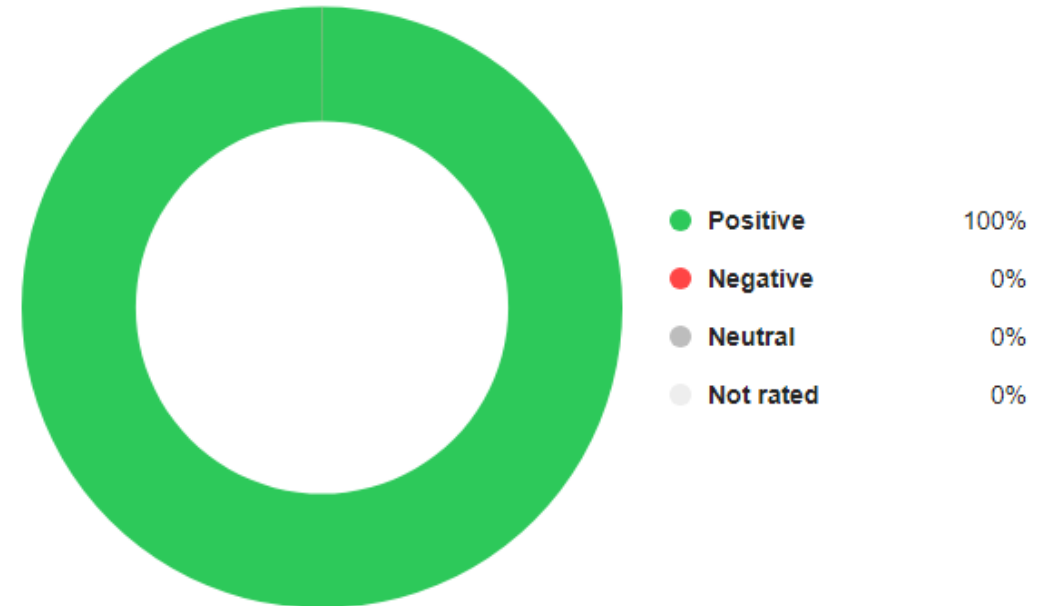
- USA Today - [Global Microsoft CrowdStrike outage creates issues from Starbucks to schools to hospitals](#)
- ABC News - [At least 12 major hospitals, health systems affected by global IT outage](#)
- Fortune - [Doctors revert to pen and paper after CrowdStrike's outage hits hospitals: 'Every single computer was down'](#)

## Local (coverage from all local news outlets including TV, radio and print)

- Cincinnati Business Courier - [CVG airport, Cincinnati Children's impacted by global Microsoft outage](#)
- Cincinnati Enquirer - [Cincinnati Children's reschedules appointments, says surgery delays likely due to Microsoft outages](#)
- WCPO - [Microsoft widespread outages affecting users worldwide: Here's how you could be impacted](#)
- WKRC - [Local hospitals experienced issues due to major IT outage](#)
- WLWT - [Global IT outage: What Cincinnati-area businesses, services were impacted?](#)
- WVXU - [How the global outage is — or isn't — affecting Greater Cincinnati companies and communities](#)
- WXIX - [Local impact of global IT outage at CVG, hospitals, 911 centers, gas stations](#)

## Sentiment - Cincinnati Children's

Jul 18 - Jul 19



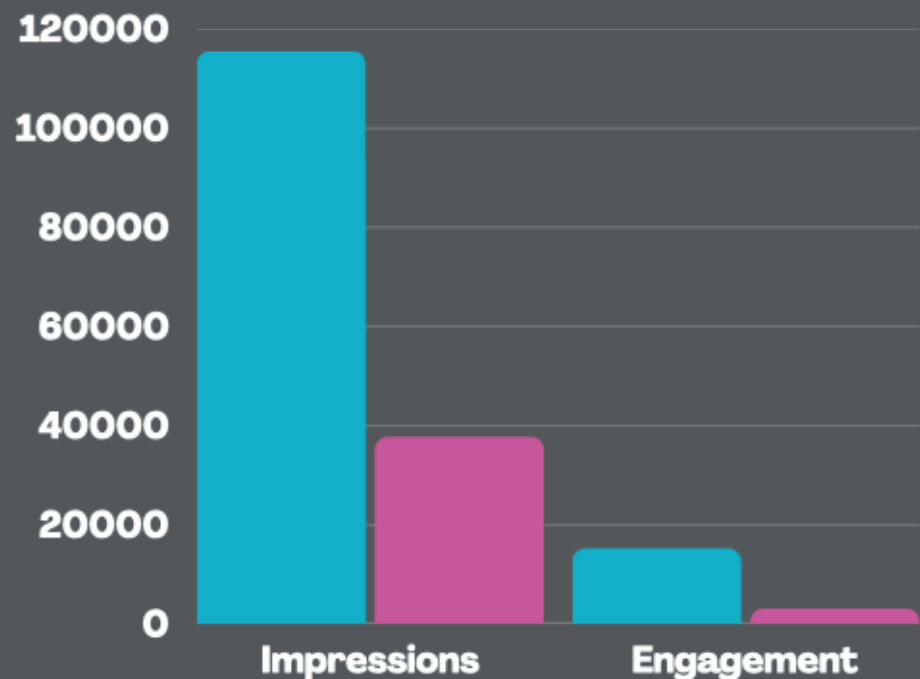
# Results – Social Media

Crowdstrike - Graph

## Facebook Metrics

CrowdStrike

Average



Andrea Butzier

We had somewhat of a simple visit compared to some but I would have never really known systems were down for most. Everyone had a good attitude and did the best they could without having full functioning systems. Great job to the staff for handling it so well!

16w Like Reply Hide

14

Shanna Banks Thompson

Thank you all for making appointments happen today!! We had traveled in from out of state and were able to be at our appointment

16w Like Reply Hide

10

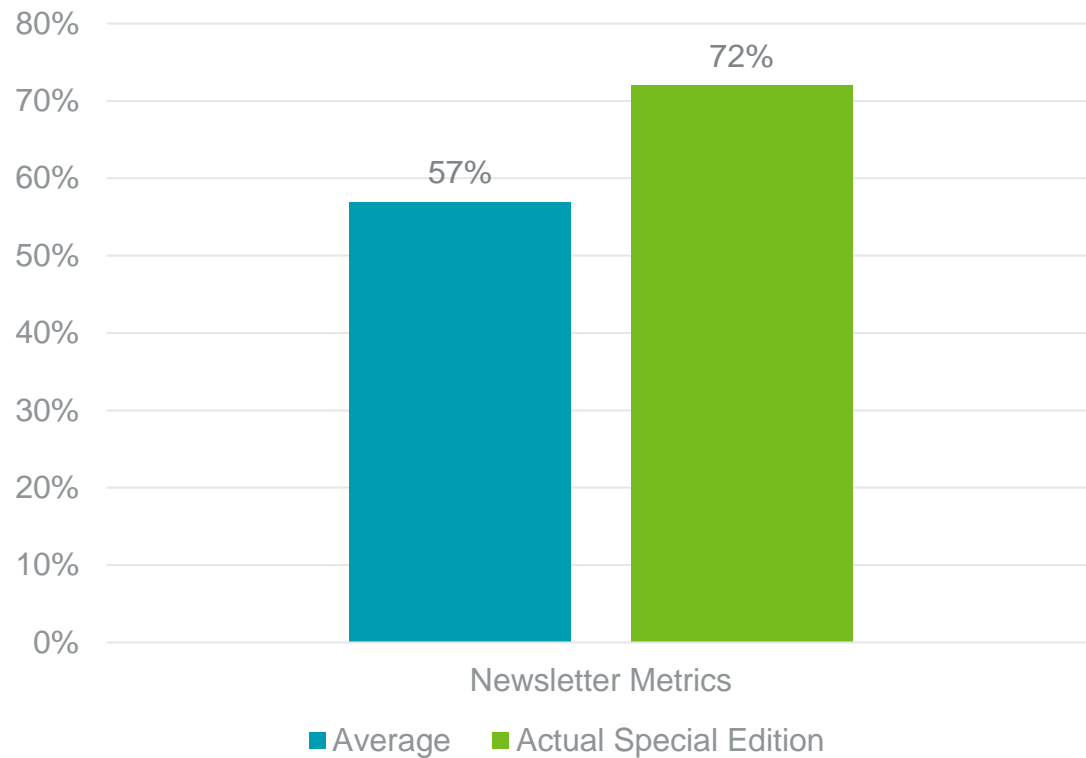
Anne Scharff



reed.ali\_ I know that this was so difficult for the whole staff, we were inpatient in the middle of our last night and our sons sleep study. Unfortunately with modern medicine things happen, but the nurses, doctors, and child life specialists showered us with compassion. Cincinnati Childrens has top notch staff!

# Results – Employee Communication

Open Rate Comparison



**Announcements (2,501 views) and follow-up stories (2,314 views) ranked among top viewed content for quarter. Topics covered:**

- Impact on disruption to operations
- Repairs for workstations impacted
- Behind-the-scenes work of the tech teams
- Parent praise during tech outage

# Key Takeaways

- We were ready!
- Have a shared workspace, including alternate access
- Have all the tools you need in the workspace
- Ensure team members have notifications set up
- Practice and drill regularly
- Learn from others

# Thank You + Q&A

**Kelly Calhoun, MSM, APR**

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