PROTOCOL FOR:
On-Site Pathology Assistance for Image-Guided Biopsies

Image-Guided biopsies are an integral part of medical care, allowing the establishment of a histopathologic diagnosis through a minimally invasive procedure. Image-guided biopsies can be either fine needle aspirations, cores, or both. Some procedures, particularly core biopsy, may not require on-site pathology personnel. The following guidelines should be used in the determination of the need for cytopathological on-site assistance. In some cases, a cytopathology technologist will be on-site instead of a cytopathology physician.

1. **Adequacy of Specimen:** A biopsy material obtained from challenging locations may require on-site determination of “adequacy” of sample, to prevent additional passes.

2. **On-Site Diagnosis:** An on-site diagnosis may be needed to determine immediate therapy for the patient. Examples would include: **immediately** preceding an intended ablation therapy, or **immediately** prior to anticipated patient surgery. In these cases, a cytopathology physician will be in attendance.

3. **Core Biopsy Samples:** In general, there is no need for on-site pathological assistance when core biopsies are obtained. Touch preps of the core sample can destroy the sample, and prevent further pathologic evaluation. Core biopsies are best handled by placing the cores in formalin and sending the specimen to surgical pathology.

4. **Fine Needle Aspirations:** Many of these specimens will be placed into a cell block that will benefit from the presence of on-site cytopathology personnel. In these cases, the person who will be present for the FNA will be a cytotechnologist.

5. **Lymphoma:** A lymphoma diagnosis requires special attention. An FNA specimen (for flow cytometry) will be needed. A core biopsy may be taken after sufficient FNA passes have been made. In most cases, a cytopathology technologist or physician should be in attendance.

6. If pathology personnel are on-site, the image-guided biopsy procedure should be performed in an expedited manner to be respectful of their time and effort, and call only when actively performing the biopsy. Be aware that there is no ancillary help after 4:30 p.m. Image-guided biopsies which require on-site cytopathology personnel should be scheduled and performed with this time limitation in mind.

7. Contact Susan Maygarden, Director of Cytopathology, at 984-974-9150, or the attending on service that day in Cytopathology at 984-974-1477 if you have questions.

The most updated version of this policy will appear on the UNC Radiology website.

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