Pathologist Assistants PA (ASCP): Responsibilities

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<th>Final Approval: October 2010</th>
<th>Effective: October 2010</th>
<th>Next Review Date: April 2015</th>
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List all stakeholder(s) and dates of approval:

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<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Name(s):</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Reviewed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geoffrey Werner</td>
<td>10/9/10</td>
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<td>Mark Magilner, MD</td>
<td>10/14/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geoffrey Werner</td>
<td>4/12/13</td>
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<td>Geoffrey Werner</td>
<td>3/26/14</td>
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Describe briefly the most recent revision made to this policy, procedure or protocol & why:

New procedure
10/2010 – Added statement delineating specimen types to be examined by Pathologist Assistant.

Purpose/Policy Statement:

The Pathologist Assistants PA (ASCP) are highly trained professionals in the Anatomic Pathology Department who perform an invaluable role in the timely provision of quality service to the patients served by the department. The pathologist’s assistants will perform their duties according to the standards set by the Pathology Department and the accrediting bodies including the JCAHO and CAP.

Definitions:

- n/a

**STEPS / KEY POINTS**

**KEY POINTS OF EMPHASIS:**

1. The pathologist assistants will have completed the appropriate training and will have successfully completed the required certification process. Verification of the certification, which will be renewed every three years, will be kept on file.

2. The pathologist assistants are responsible for the gross examination, photography, gross description and dissection of surgical pathology specimens received into the department and the preparation of tissue for processing by the histology laboratory. The identity of all specimens is to be maintained at all times during the examination, dissection and processing steps.

3. All gross pathology examination methods may be performed and all specimen types may be examined by the pathologist assistant. No specimen type or examination procedure is excluded. However, for any specimen or examination, a pathologist will be available for consultation or assistance as desired by the pathologist assistant.

4. The pathologist assistants are to perform their duties under the supervision of a pathologist. The pathologist who is assigned to supervise the gross room and the pathologist’s assistants is the pathologist who is assigned to cover frozen sections for that designated time frame as delineated by the weekly schedule.

5. The pathologist assistants will be expected to perform their duties generally under indirect supervision of the assigned pathologist for routine specimens received into the department. Routine specimens are designated as those for which there is a standard protocol for examination and dissection. Specimens received into the department, which appear confusing, complicated or require special dissection techniques will be reviewed directly with the assigned pathologist. The case will then be assigned to the pathologist involved in the gross examination process unless otherwise specified.
6. Routine specimens will be examined, dissected and sampled according to the protocols approved by the Pathology Department. These protocols include:
   a. Ackerman’s Surgical Pathology text, Appendix A
   b. Salem Hospital and PPA accepted Routine Gross Examination policy.
   c. Specific department defined policies and procedures.

7. Templates will be used for those cases and specimens for which templates are available and specified for use. The templates will be updated as needed to incorporate additional needs for proper evaluation.

8. Specimens received into the department with a request for an immediate review, such as frozen sections or gross examination at the time of surgery, will be handled directly by the assigned pathologist unless otherwise directed. The pathologist assistants may be asked to assist with the review and performance of frozen sections but the resulting slides will be reviewed by the pathologist.

9. The pathologist assistants may be asked to perform post-mortem examinations, including summation of the patient’s clinical history, evisceration and dissection of organs, sampling of tissues, photography of specimens, final dictation of gross autopsy findings, and preparation of the preliminary anatomic diagnoses. These duties will be performed under the supervision of the pathologist responsible for the autopsy and its microscopic examination.

10. To ensure timely processing of specimens in the absence of one or both of the pathologist assistants due to illness or vacation, or if the specimen load is extreme, the pathologist assigned to the grossing room will assist and cover the duties of gross description, dissection and preparation of tissue for processing by the histology department.

11. The pathologist assistants are encouraged to attend intradepartmental and interdepartmental conferences and may be asked to present cases for discussion.

12. The pathologist’s assistants are expected and encouraged to pursue Continuing Medical Education activities either through individual study or attendance of applicable local and national conferences.

13. The pathologist assistant’s performance will be monitored as delineated in the Anatomic Pathology Performance Improvement Program and the Medical Director of Anatomic Pathology will evaluate the pathologist's assistants at least annually.

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Equipment/Supplies (If Applicable): 
n/a

Form Name & Number or Attachment Name (If Applicable): 
surgpath02

Author Position: 
Pathologist

Review/Revision Authority (Position Not Individual Name): 
Medical Director, Operation Manager, Histology Supervisor, Pathologist Assistant

Expert Consultant Position/s (Not Individual Name/s): 
n/a

References (Required for Clinical Documents):
1. Cap Commission on Laboratory Accreditation, 2001 Anatomic Pathology Checklist.

Is there a Regulatory Requirement? Yes ☐ No ☑
If yes, insert requirement information here:

Review History (No Changes): 
n/a

Revision History (Note changes in area under header):
Computer Search Words:

Policy, Procedure or Protocol Cross Reference Information:
n/a