

# Cytotechnologist's due diligence helps patient avoid unnecessary procedure

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## CHANTEL WHETSELL'S DUE DILIGENCE AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL ALTERED A PATIENT'S PROGNOSIS AND HELPED AVOID A SECOND INVASIVE PROCEDURE.

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Chantel Whetsell, Cytopathology, exemplifies what it means to place the needs of the patient first. In addition to fulfilling the duties of her day-to-day job — screening slides and reviewing patients' histories — Whetsell makes sure that she has a complete picture of the patient's lab tests to present to the pathologist on duty.

Such attention to detail can alter a patient's prognosis and treatment, as Whetsell demonstrated recently.

The patient was originally scheduled for two specimen collection procedures to evaluate a lung mass with suspected malignancy. Whetsell was brought into

the bronchoscopy suite to perform an assessment to check cellular content and the sample quality of the specimens to ensure the pathologist has enough material to render a final diagnosis.

During her case review, Whetsell discovered an infection and inflammatory process while screening the slide that contained samples from the patient's first procedure. She quickly recognized that the lung mass had fungal organisms and no evidence of malignancy. This finding was important since the second procedure that the patient had scheduled was to check for metastatic malignancy in the lymph nodes.

Whetsell then asked Xochiquetzal Geiger, M.D., a pathologist, for her assessment of the unexpected findings. Dr. Geiger confirmed the presence of fungal organisms and immediately communicated this finding to the

pulmonologist, who then canceled the second procedure.

Whetsell's investigative nature and proactive efforts are examples of Mayo Clinic's commitment to safety. Through her open dialogue with Dr. Geiger, Whetsell provided the right answers for staff to pinpoint an effective plan and help the patient avoid another invasive procedure.

"Chantel is a shining star on the team and truly puts herself out there for the patient," says Joann Kirkland, Whetsell's manager in the Anatomic Pathology Laboratory. "My advice to others is to do the due diligence for the patients, and don't be afraid to challenge others' interpretations."

"When unexpected situations occur, use all available resources to provide the best patient care continuously and consistently," Whetsell notes.