



Parish of Ascension

OFFICE OF THE PARISH PRESIDENT

KENNY MATASSA
Parish President

Ascension Counseling Center Video Newsletter Launches Second Season on APTV

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GONZALES – Ascension Parish President Kenny Matassa announced Ascension Counseling Center (ACC) later this month will launch the second season of its monthly Video Newsletter on Ascension21 (cable channel 21), highlighting the numerous services being offered to parish residents.

Ascension is the only parish in the metro area, and one of only two parishes in the state, that publicly funds mental health and substance abuse treatment services. The mission of ACC is to provide comprehensive therapeutic services to Ascension Parish residents in an effort to foster healthy coping skills that will improve their quality of life.

“We’re primarily a counseling center where you come in to see us if you have a problem, and we help you set a goal and show you how to reach it,” said Suzanne Hamilton, executive director of ACC.

The center is Ascension Parish’s mental health department and is funded by a 2 mil tax that provides for counseling programs and substance abuse treatment. While the program receives some revenue from grants, client payments, insurance, and Medicaid, these funds are limited and do not support the agency’s operations.

“If people do not have insurance, the millage provides for a sliding scale fee that begins at \$5,” Hamilton said.

Hamilton said ACC provides individual therapy for children as young as 6 years, adolescents and adults. They also provide group therapy, couples therapy, and family therapy.

ACC has both mental health and substance abuse treatment programs. Referrals come from word-of-mouth, self-referral, Ascension Parish Schools, Apple Digital Academy, Families in Need of Services (FINS), the courts, the Pre-Trial Intervention program, the Juvenile Drug Diversion Program, and more.

Mental health treatment programs include treatment for:

- depression
- anxiety
- trauma
- work-related problems
- relationship problems
- anger
- stress
- victims of crime

The center offers group counseling for:

- anxiety management
- women's issues
- parenting
- smoking cessation
- anger management

ACC also provides psychiatric evaluation and medication management for clients who are engaged in counseling with a therapist.

Substance abuse adolescent prevention programs are also offered including:

- Toward No Drug education program
- Guiding Good Choices (to help parents keep their children substance free)
- Right Choices Life Skills class for adolescents
- Intensive Out-Patient program
- anger management

Substance abuse adult evaluation and treatment are available, including an Intensive Out-patient program for those who can't take the time to go in-patient for treatment and 16-week treatment groups.

ACC provides intake screenings for mental health and substance use problems for everyone who is incarcerated at the Ascension Parish Jail.

ACC also provides public outreach events with their Speaker's Bureau which provides speakers for community groups, churches, civic groups, and professional groups on a variety of topics. They also provide mental health screenings and educational information at community health fairs.

Every month ACC provides approximately 450 services and takes over 257 intake screening calls at the clinic, and the Ascension Parish jail.

Hamilton said ACC is a certified Medicaid Application Center. Other medical facilities in the parish will offer this service to their patients, but ACC offers it to parish residents on a walk-in basis.

The Gonzales clinic is located at 1112 S. East Ascension Complex Blvd. (off E. Worthey Rd. next to the health unit). The staff includes psychiatrists, counselors and a nurse. These highly trained professionals specialize in the treatment of mental health and substance abuse disorders.

For more information about the agency or its services, tune in to Ascension Counseling Center's Video Newsletter on Ascension21 (cable channel 21 on COX and EATEL). The second season airing schedule is Sunday at 8 a.m., Wednesday at 11 p.m., Thursday at noon, Friday at 7 p.m. and Saturday at 4 p.m.

Information is also available on the Ascension Counseling Center's Facebook page, or at www.AscensionParish.net. Select "Departments," then "M – Z," then "Mental Health." ACC may be reached at (225) 450-1016.



PHOTO CUTLINE – (From Left) Clinical Manager Lisa Weber-Curry, Director Suzanne Hamilton, and Intake Coordinator Dawnyelle Bennett of the cable television show “Ascension Counseling Center’s Video Newsletter” are set for their second season of programs on Ascension21, cable channel 21 on COX and EATEL. The show will continue to highlight mental health and substance abuse treatment services being offered to Ascension Parish residents.

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