

## Behavioral health center receives grant

By GORDON JACKSON The Brunswick News | Posted: Friday, May 1, 2015 12:00 am

ST. MARYS — For the past decade, the Coastal Counseling Center in St. Marys has filled a void in behavioral health services in Camden County.

Prior to the center being established, clinical director Dale Blanton said county residents who were uninsured or under insured would have to drive to Brunswick for professional help with behavioral health issues.

Since the non-profit center opened at a site near the Southeast Georgia Health System complex in St. Marys, Blanton said staff has dealt with a variety of issues, from substance abuse and suicide threats or attempts to anger management and relationship counseling.

The center received a grant Wednesday from the Communities of Coastal Georgia Foundation to support the behavior health programs offered.

Blanton said the nearly \$3,700 grant is important to keeping the center open.

“It helps us keep the lights on, literally,” he said. “We’re grateful for any amount. We’re still looking for other funding sources.”

Fees are charged on a sliding scale, based on a person’s ability to pay and the type of health insurance, if they have any.

Other than that, the only source of funding comes from donations and charitable organizations.

Blanton said the center is seeing lots of couples and families with relationship problems, as well as conducting assessments on people suspected to be suicidal and those with substance abuse problems.

The center operates on a tight budget, Blanton said.

“We don’t have a lot of money for public relations,” he said. “A lot of our referrals are word of mouth.”