

DR. MILLICENT BROWN
CAROLINA FOOT AND ANKLE HEALTH CENTER

“In high school, I was active in dance, track, and basketball, and I sprained my ankle and saw a podiatrist,” says Dr. Millicent Brown, owner of Carolina Foot and Ankle Health Center in Oxford, North Carolina. “On the way home from the appointment, my mother said that I should be a podiatrist—and years later, here I am.”

Dr. Millicent Brown is one of many North Carolina small business owners who have recently received an emergency bridge loan through the NC COVID-19 Rapid Recovery Loan program. NC Rapid Recovery is a statewide consortium of partners—including the Golden LEAF Foundation, the NC Rural Center, and currently seven nonprofit lenders—working across the state to support small-business owners struggling with the economic impact of COVID-19. The program was launched at the onset of the pandemic and is structured to provide loans with a low-interest rate and no payments required in the first six-months.



“Our first concern when the pandemic really started was keeping our patients safe and healthy.”

Throughout her career, Dr. Brown always knew she wanted her own private practice. She worked in Lumberton, Laurinburg, and in Pinehurst prior to opening her own office. “It was helpful to have that time to learn the business-end of private practice,” says Brown. “They don’t teach you how to run a business in medical school.”

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS



“Being a business owner right now is stressful and there’s a lot we’re dealing with behind the scenes.”

When the time was right to open her business, she started calling around to figure out where there was a need. “I ended up calling Granville Medical Center, where they had been without a podiatrist in the county for eight months.” Dr. Brown started her practice, Carolina Foot and Ankle Health Center, in 2014. Though located in Granville County, Carolina Foot and Ankle Health Center has patients from Vance and Warren counties, and even Virginia.

As a podiatrist, Brown works with individuals who are elderly or have underlying health conditions that would have a hard time recovering should they contract COVID-19. “Our first concern when the pandemic really started was keeping our patients safe and healthy,” says Brown.

As COVID-19 continued to impact North Carolina, elective surgeries were postponed and other measures were taken to mitigate the risk of contraction and to ensure that healthcare systems would not be overwhelmed. “The hospital I work with is a small, community-based hospital,” says Brown. “With the volume of work being down, using resources wisely and making smart decisions while maintaining patient health and safety is important.”

Dr. Brown applied for the NC COVID-19 Rapid Recovery loan to help mitigate the unknowns around maintaining staff as the pandemic continues. “Being a business owner right now is stressful and there’s a lot we’re dealing with behind the scenes,” says Brown. “But supporting local small businesses and being kind and understanding as we’re navigating these changes is crucial.”



Dr. Brown's loan was administered by Thread Capital, one of the nonprofit NC Rapid Recovery lenders. To learn more about the NC COVID-19 Rapid Recovery Loan program, visit www.ncrapidrecovery.org.