Doctors hailed for improving the health of poor, uninsured

BY SCOTT BLAIR

The work that Dr. Nilda Soto and Dr. Tina Carroll-Scott do serving the poor and uninsured is far removed from the compli-
cated, high-pressure world of health care and health insur-
ance, but their efforts haven’t gone unnoticed.

As medical director and CEO of the Open Door Health Center in Homestead, Dr. Soto and her small staff typically see 40 to 50 patients a day, including farm
workers.

Their mission statement is deceptively uncomplicated: “Open Door Health Center is a primary healthcare center dedicated to

serving the uninsured poor of South Dade at no cost to them.”

Dr. Carroll-Scott has a very similar mission: As medical di-
rector of the South Miami Children’s Clinic, she and her staff provide health care and health education to South
Miami’s uninsured children and young people.

The clinic runs up its mis-

sions with a quote from Winston Churchill: “We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.”

Dr. Soto and Dr. Carroll-Scott have been named to this year’s “Best of Miami” for their leader-

ship and dedication to expanding and improving health and medical care. They were nominated by Baptist Health South Florida President and CEO Brian Keeley, who had this to say:

“I commend (Dr. Soto and Dr. Carroll-Scott) for their work in the South Florida community that provides quality care to the uninsured,” Mr. Keeley said. “Their tireless devotion to serv-
ing, for individuals, children and families in times of need — and in keeping them well — makes a real difference in our community. Both the health center and the

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Dr. Nilda Soto takes the blood pressure of patient Medina Miranda at Florida State University College of Medicine medical student Ginger Baker watches her at the Open Door Health Center in Homestead.

On May 13, 1987, she felt she was losing touch with why she origi-
nally got into medicine — to help the underserved. So when the

opportunity arose to lead the clinic, she took it.

“It was a blessing for me,” she said, adding about the clinic and its mission: “This is my baby. I’m personally invested in its success.”

Other “Best of Miami” nomi-
nees in health care

Dr. Steven Falcone, University of Miami Health Sys-
tem, UHealth, went on to graduate and medical school at

the University of Havana, and has since built a strong professional reputa-
tion there as both a physician and a leader on the business side of health care.

“Tireless” is one word that

Jackson Health System President and CEO Carlos Migoya uses to describe Dr. Falcone.

“Steve Falcone distinguishes himself as a leader, as a partner, and as a thoughtful defender of world-class health care for ev-

erone in Miami-Dade County,”

Mr. Migoya said in nominating Dr. Falcone, who specializes in radiology and neuroradiology.

“The field of medicine and the business of hospitals are changing like a thrill ride: fast, unpredictable, and sometimes scary,” Mr. Migoya added. “Dr. Falcone is the calm eye in that storm’s center.”

He described Dr. Falcone as a “top-rate” clinician who also thrives as a “transformative” organizational leader.

His responsibilities at the University of Miami are vast, but he wears them lightly and creates the trust and collegiality neces-
sary for long-term partnerships to thrive,” Mr. Migoya said.

“Dr. Falcone has been an exceptional partner, and UM look past their own parochial interests and stay focused on our shared com-
munity mission.”

About Dr. Falcone, he added: “He has played a pivotal role in making Miami a growing global center for some of the world’s most innovative specialized care in areas such as trauma, neurosur-
gery, pediatrics and organ transplant.

In every sense of the word, we are a healthier place because of Steve’s contributions.”

Don Steigman is making his mark in health care in a differ-
ent way. As executive vice presi-
dent and chief operating officer of the county-owned Jackson Health System, Mr. Steigman has played a key role in a dra-
matic financial turnaround for the organization.

The Jackson system has gen-
erated an operating surplus for the last two years and is the beneficiary of $836 million in general obligation bonds that will be used for capital renewal and expansion of Jackson’s net-
work of facilities.

For such reasons, he was nominated by Joe Napolitano, inter-
tem chief operating officer at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and UHealth.

From the administrative side, Mr. Steigman looks for ways to im-
prove health care, said Mr. Napolitano, also the university’s se-
nior vice president for business and finance and chief financial officer.

He said: “Don has partnered on . . . best-in-class programs including the Miami Transplant Institute and The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, in addition to renowned services provided at the Ryder Trauma Center and Holti Children’s Hospital.”