William J. Fulkerson, MD, MBA’02

Having served Duke in clinical leadership roles for more than 30 years, William Fulkerson has played a significant role in helping the academic medical center rise to its current status as a national leader in quality patient care.

Fulkerson first came to Duke in 1983 as an assistant professor of medicine and one year later was named director of the Medical Intensive Care Unit and a medical control officer for Life Flight Medical Transport Service. He continued to rise through the ranks, holding various appointments including chief of pulmonary and critical care medicine in the Department of Medicine, director of critical care services for Duke University Hospital, and executive medical director of the Private Diagnostic Clinic.

After completing a master of business administration degree from the Duke Fuqua School of Business in 2002, Fulkerson became CEO of Duke University Hospital and vice president of Duke University Health System.

Currently executive vice president of the health system, Fulkerson and his team have overseen numerous initiatives at Duke, including the opening of the Duke Cancer Center and Duke Medicine Pavilion, the integration of Duke Raleigh and Duke Regional hospitals, and the system-wide rollout of an electronic medical record system.

Committed to patient care, Fulkerson has worked with other leaders, physicians, nurses, and staff to build a culture that promotes safety. These efforts have resulted in improvements in the patient experience and hospital performance and earned Duke a number of top honors, including the 2014 Healthgrades Outstanding Patient Experience Award, the Governor’s Award of Performance Excellence in Healthcare, and Magnet designation for nursing excellence for all three hospitals by the American Nurses’ Credentialing Center.

A pulmonologist, Fulkerson is active in clinical practice and teaching. Having trained dozens of pulmonary fellows, he received the Eugene A. Stead Award for Excellence in Teaching at Duke in 1985 and 1996.

Education: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Duke University’s Fuqua School of Business
Training: Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Current Titles: Executive Vice President, Duke University Health System; Professor of Medicine, Duke University School of Medicine