

Changing healthcare system for the better



REACHING his potential has been the strict aim of David Dahm since he nearly lost his life in a car crash driving home from work at 5.30 one morning.

With an enhanced awareness of his mortality and his place in life, Mr Dahm has stretched himself daily since that eventful day.

The result was on display at the Telstra Business Awards last month when his company, Health and Life, won the MYOB SA Small Business of the Year award and the Yellow Pages Social Responsibility award.

"It was good public recognition and very humbling to receive these awards," Mr Dahm said.

Health and Life was also recognised as one of the fastest growing companies in South Australia last year.

With 11 employees in Adelaide, the business has grown by 55 per cent annually for each of the past three years.

It includes two 50-50 joint ventures in Queensland and Victoria, with the business employing 60 people in total.

Mr Dahm's recovery from the trauma of the severe car crash in 1985 led him to re-examine his life and his career.

"I was taking too much for granted until then, when I started to realise that while money is important, it's not everything," he said.

Mr Dahm was an accountant with international chartered accounting firm KPMG until the car crash changed his life.

Disillusioned with the healthcare system, he wanted to help patients better navigate through it.

He developed Australia's first comprehensive medi-



CLEAR VISION: David Dahm began his own business after a car crash led him to reassess his life.

Picture: BRENTON EDWARDS

cal, dental and allied health accounting and practice management healthcare advisory firm, with clients including the Adelaide Women's and Children's Hospital and Noarlunga Hospital.

He comes from a medical family, which exposed him to the common difficulties doctors experience while running their practices.

The result is his thriving health practice management consultancy, which has cli-

ents around Australia and is an advocate for clients as well as patients.

He said primary aims of the business included helping health carers to become better business managers and patient advocates.

"We are about creating the future, not just providing numbers for the past," Mr Dahm said.

"We take smaller practices and turn them into sustainable larger practices by

helping them provide a broader range of services and keeping costs down so health care remains accessible and affordable in the local community."

Health and Life helps doctors grow and develop, especially in rural Australia, often with amazing results.

It provides monthly monitoring for clients and produces a number of industry reports, including *The Good, Bad and Ugly Report*, which

helps healthcare providers better manage resources.

Mr Dahm attributes his business success to having a clear vision which is shared by others, having people believe in him and giving back to the community.

"We are proud supporters of the Phoenix Netball club and are actively developing health and financial literacy programs in the community with a prime focus on adolescent children," he said.