Currently the SC Respite Coalition has issued 297 respite vouchers to help families who are trying to take care of loved ones who live in the home and cannot be left alone. The initial voucher funds came from a “Lifespans Respite Grant” from the US Government’s Administration on Aging. Happily, SC was one of the first 12 states to be funded.

From that grant, we have a limited amount of voucher funds remaining and available to family caregivers who do NOT qualify for the new voucher funds offered through the Family Caregiver Support Program.

**LIFESPAN RESPITE SYSTEM**

In May Lt. Governor McConnell released our statewide plan for developing the LIFESPAN RESPITE SYSTEM. The $3 million he requested for respite was approved by the legislature. With your help, we will work to see it in the state budget every year, maybe with more funds for other groups too!

**Eligibility for Family Caregiver Support Funds**

The $3 million will be distributed through the 10 Family Caregiver Support Programs at the Area Agencies on Aging. These funds will be for the following:

1. anyone caring full time for someone over 60,
2. grandparents 55+ raising birth grandchildren under 18 years of age,
3. parents over 55 of adult “children” with disabilities.

NOT eligible: people under 18, in hospice or CLTC, or spouses of people with developmental disabilities.

Alzheimer’s funds will now come through them as well for caregivers of people of any age whose MD certifies they have dementia or Alzheimer’s. However, the Alzheimer’s Association will continue to give out the “sitter” funds for caregivers to attend support groups and educational events, call 1-800-868-9095.

To find your Family Caregiver Support program, Call 1-800-868-9095 or go to [http://aging.sc.gov/contact/Pages/FCSPContacts.aspx](http://aging.sc.gov/contact/Pages/FCSPContacts.aspx).

Try to be patient – this will be a big task for the Family Caregiver Support Programs! And, very important family caregivers, keep copies of your doctor’s certification to use in more than one program.

To stay informed, please keep checking our website for resources and updates at [www.screspitecoalition.org](http://www.screspitecoalition.org). Lastly, continue to tell your legislators about the importance of respite in caring for loved ones in the home. It improves quality of life AND saves substantial public funding.

Other news: Renée Gibson is now with the SC Dept. of Mental Health. We miss her.