

ST. LOUIS, Feb 22, 2002 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX/ -- Centene Corporation (Nasdaq: CNTE) today announced the appointment of Jesse N. Hunter as Manager of Mergers and Acquisitions effective February 22, 2002. Mr. Hunter will report to Centene's chief financial officer Karey L. Witty.

Centene's president and chief executive officer Michael F. Neidorff, said, "We are pleased to welcome Mr. Hunter to Centene, where his extensive experience of managed care alliances and collaborations will be a tremendous asset to the company as we move into the next phase of our growth strategy. He has the ability, experience and background to assist Centene's future development. His appointment is particularly timely given our stated 2002 goals, one of which is to evaluate market opportunities to diversify the business and increase market share. Importantly, Mr. Hunter's contribution will help to sustain the remarkable growth that we have experienced over the past two years."

Before joining Centene, Mr. Hunter served as Manager of Mergers and Acquisitions for Humana, Inc. in Humana's corporate office in Louisville, Kentucky. He was responsible for performing financial, valuation, and industry analysis and helped facilitate a company turnaround by selling business units that were no longer consistent with Humana's corporate strategy. Mr. Hunter also evaluated acquisition opportunities and coordinated due diligence. Prior to Humana, Hunter was a financial analyst for Heller Financial (formerly Healthcare Financial Partners, Inc.).

Centene Corporation provides managed care programs and related services to individuals receiving benefits under Medicaid, including Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Centene operates health plans in Indiana, Texas and Wisconsin.

This press release contains forward-looking statements that relate to future events and future financial performance of Centene. Subsequent events and developments may cause the company's estimates to change. The company disclaims any obligation to update this forward-looking financial information in the future. Readers are cautioned that matters subject to forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks and uncertainties, including economic, regulatory, competitive and other factors that may cause Centene's or its industry's actual results, levels of activity, performance or achievements to be materially different from any future results, levels of activity, performance or achievements expressed or implied by these forward-looking statements. Actual results may differ from projections or estimates due to a variety of important factors, including Centene's ability to accurately predict and effectively manage health benefits and other operating expenses, competition, changes in health care practices, changes in federal or state laws or regulations, inflation, provider contract changes, new technologies, reduction in provider payments by governmental payors, major epidemics, disasters and numerous other factors affecting the delivery and cost of health care. The expiration, cancellation or suspension of Centene's Medicaid managed care contracts by state governments would also negatively impact Centene.

SOURCE Centene Corporation

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