

ST. LOUIS, Sep 17, 2003 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Centene Corporation (Nasdaq:CNTE) today announced three strategic appointments to its management team, effective immediately. Joseph P. Drozda, Jr., M.D., was appointed to the newly created position of Executive Vice President, Operations. He previously served as Senior Vice President, Medical Affairs. Additionally, Daniel R. Paquin, formerly the company's Senior Vice President, Health Plan Business Group, was appointed to the newly created position of Senior Vice President, New Plan Implementation and Development. Both Drozda and Paquin will continue to report to Michael F. Neidorff, Centene's President and Chief Executive Officer.

Centene also announced the appointment of James Van Halderen, Psy.D., as President and CEO of NurseWise(SM), Centene's nurse triage subsidiary, and Script Assist, LLC, Centene's medication compliance company. Mr. Van Halderen will direct the day-to-day activities of these companies and will report to John Tadich, Centene's Senior Vice President, Specialty Companies.

"I am pleased to announce these three key management appointments, which are critical to the execution of Centene's continued growth and development. Each of these individuals has a solid level of expertise and management experience that will contribute to the successful execution of the next phase of Centene's growth strategy. Mr. Van Halderen's appointment will allow us to focus on our goal of building a specialty company expertise at Centene. Dr. Drozda, one of the most knowledgeable medical management executives in the healthcare industry, will play a critical role in ensuring the current business' growth. Leveraging his extensive experience in developing and managing Medicaid plans in diverse markets, Mr. Paquin will focus his full attention on the implementation of newly acquired plans and potential start-up markets," stated Neidorff.

Mr. Van Halderen brings 20 years of behavioral health and managed care experience to Centene. Most recently, he served as Senior Vice President for Magellan Behavioral Health's West/TRICARE Division where he had responsibility for the company's Federal Government programs and commercial health plan programs in the western U.S. Prior to that time, he was Senior Vice President of Merit Behavioral Care's Western Region and Colorado Area Director for Medco Behavioral Care. His professional background also includes experience in community mental health centers, psychiatric hospitals, employee assistance programs and direct clinical care.

Before joining Centene in January 2001, Dr. Drozda owned a health services consulting firm that worked closely with managed care organizations, physician groups, hospital networks and employer groups on a variety of managed care delivery and financing issues. He was a founder and later Medical Director of Physicians for Group Health Plan of Greater St. Louis, a joint venture of United Healthcare and local physicians. In addition, he served as Vice President/Chief Medical Officer of PHP, Inc., a statewide HMO based in Greensboro, N.C., and Vice President of Medical Management for SSM Health Care, a health services network in St. Louis.

Mr. Paquin joined Centene in January 2003 from United Healthcare where he served as Regional Vice President, Midwest/Medicaid. He previously served as Senior Vice President of Operations at AmeriChoice Health Services. Prior to that time, he was Regional Vice President, Northeast Region at Comprehensive Care Corporation.

Centene Corporation provides managed care programs and related services to individuals receiving benefits under Medicaid, including Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). The company operates health plans in Wisconsin, Texas, Indiana and New Jersey. Information regarding Centene is available via the Internet at www.centene.com.

SOURCE: Centene Corporation

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