

ST. LOUIS, Nov 24, 2003 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Centene Corporation (NYSE: CNC) announced today that it has closed its acquisition of the Medicaid-related assets of Family Health Plan, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Mercy Health Partners. The transaction has been approved by state regulators and will be effective on January 1, 2004.

Centene will operate in Ohio through its wholly owned Buckeye Community Health Plan, Inc. subsidiary, consistent with the company's philosophy of localized services, support and branding. As part of the approval process, Buckeye Community Health Plan received the Certificate of Authority and Medicaid certifications from the state of Ohio, enabling it to operate as a Medicaid HMO.

Michael F. Neidorff, President and Chief Executive Officer of Centene, said, "We are pleased to have closed this acquisition within our projected timeframe, which marks the entry into our fifth state, Ohio. This acquisition is consistent with our stated strategy of entering new markets that mandate Medicaid enrollment, with the ultimate goal of providing demonstrated cost savings to the states."

Neidorff continued, "We look forward to supporting the efforts of providers and members in the marketplace to deliver high-quality care to the Medicaid recipients in Ohio. The acquisition also provides a strong foundation for future growth of our managed Medicaid model and the opportunity for expansion into other Ohio markets."

"I would like to thank the Ohio Department of Insurance and the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services for their thorough and expeditious review of the applications for Buckeye in the approval process; we look forward to our continuing relationship with them," concluded Neidorff.

About Mercy Health Partners

Mercy Health Partners is a not-for-profit health system dedicated to improving the health of people in its communities with emphasis on its 150-year mission of caring for all in need. Mercy is composed of seven hospitals in Northwest Ohio including St. Vincent Mercy Medical Center, St. Charles Mercy Hospital, St. Anne Mercy Hospital, Mercy Hospital of Tiffin, Mercy Hospital of Willard, Mercy Children's Hospital and Mercy/MCO Rehabilitation Hospital at the Coghlin Pavilion. Please visit www.mercyweb.org for additional information regarding Mercy Health Partners.

About Centene 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 Texas, Wisconsin, Indiana and New Jersey. In addition, the company contracts with other healthcare organizations to provide specialty services including behavioral health, nurse triage and pharmacy compliance. Information regarding Centene is available via the Internet at www.centene.com.

The fourth paragraph of this press release contain 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. 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 successfully integrate and manage the acquisition of FHP, its 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 affect Centene.

SOURCE: Centene Corporation

Centene Corporation
Karey L. Witty, 314-725-4477
or
Investor Relations Department
Lisa M. Wilson, 212-759-3929

Customize your Business Wire news & multimedia to match your needs.
Get breaking news from companies and organizations worldwide.
Logon for FREE today at www.BusinessWire.com.

<https://investors.centene.com/2003-11-24-Centene-Corporation-Closes-Acquisition-of-Family-Health-Plans-Medicaid-Related-Assets-in-Toledo,-Ohio>