

ST. LOUIS--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Dec. 16, 2004--Centene Corporation (NYSE:CNC) announced today that two of its subsidiaries have been awarded behavioral health contracts. The State of Kansas has awarded a contract for the Kansas State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) to CenCorp Health Solutions (CenCorp), a wholly owned subsidiary of Centene. As a result of this contract, CenCorp will serve approximately 34,000 SCHIP members in 105 Kansas counties. Services will be provided by Cenpatico Behavioral Health, LLC, which is wholly owned by CenCorp.

In addition, Centene announced that its Ohio subsidiary, Buckeye Community Health Plan, has been awarded a small contract with the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services to serve approximately 1,900 eligible Enhanced Case Management lives. These two contracts together are expected to generate approximately \$4 million in revenue in 2005. However, start-up costs will preclude earnings accretion in 2005.

Samuel A. Donaldson, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer of Cenpatico Behavioral Health, stated, "We are committed to working with the State of Kansas, its families and providers to improve care for Kansas children as well as enhancing their access to care. The opportunity to serve the behavioral healthcare needs of the SCHIP population will enable us to produce better outcomes for our members."

Michael F. Neidorff, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Centene, added, "The opportunity to serve the Kansas SCHIP population is consistent with our strategy to develop a multi-line company offering both core Medicaid and specialty services. It further confirms our belief that we can partner with our states to move more members into managed behavioral health programs. CenCorp and its subsidiaries will continue to evaluate ways to demonstrate cost savings through a more comprehensive coordination of care."

Neidorff concluded, "While these state contracts are relatively modest in size, they are strategically important as we aim to establish a growing presence from which we can continue to build our free standing specialty companies."

The second paragraph of 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. 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 healthcare 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 healthcare. The expiration, cancellation or suspension of Centene's Medicaid managed care contracts by state governments would also negatively affect Centene.

#### About CenCorp Health Solutions

CenCorp strives to provide specialized health solutions to the complex problems faced by patients, healthcare providers, pharmaceutical companies and distributors and payers. CenCorp is made up of three wholly owned subsidiaries: Cenpatico Behavioral Health, NurseWise(R) and ScriptAssist. Information regarding CenCorp is available via the Internet at [www.cencorpealthsolutions.com](http://www.cencorpealthsolutions.com).

#### About Centene Corporation

Centene Corporation provides multi-line 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 Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, New Jersey, Ohio, Texas and Wisconsin. 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](http://www.centene.com).

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