

ST. LOUIS--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Centene Corporation (NYSE: CNC) today announced an educational campaign aimed at preventing the influenza virus and discouraging inappropriate antibiotic use. The Company kicked off the campaign in early October during the "Get Smart about Antibiotics Week" sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

All of Centene's eight health plans will partner with physicians and pharmacies in their local communities to educate high-risk members on preventive care techniques such as getting a flu shot, washing their hands and staying away from others when they are ill. Targeted members include children 18-years-old and under, women who are pregnant and members who receive benefits under Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and the Aged, Blind and Disabled.

"Centene and its health plans recognize the need to proactively reach out to our members through our contracted physicians, via mailings and in-person to educate them on preventing the flu and properly treating the virus," said Mary Mason, M.D., Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer. "This approach is especially important given the increased incidence of the influenza virus during the 2007/2008 season."

For the second year in a row, Centene's health plans will distribute Cold and Flu Kits to physician offices for distribution to members. These kits are designed to give the physician alternative treatment options for patients diagnosed with a cold or virus that should not be treated with antibiotics. The kits include educational information on appropriate antibiotic use, in addition to items such as nasal saline spray, nasal bulb suction, hand sanitizer, tissues and vapor rub.

"National guidelines recommend home treatment, such as rest, drinking more fluids and use of vaporizers or saline spray to relieve congestion, as opposed to antibiotic treatment for most patients with a common cold or flu. Taking antibiotics when they are not needed or taking them improperly increases the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Centene is committed to promoting better health outcomes for our members by partnering with physicians to teach patients appropriate treatment options for the common cold and other illnesses," said Dr. Mason.

During the 2007/2008 flu season, Centene's health plans were able to demonstrate a statistically significant decrease of 2-4 percentage points in its rate of potentially inappropriate antibiotic prescriptions as measured through claims data.

About Centene Corporation

Centene Corporation is a leading multi-line healthcare enterprise that provides programs and related services to individuals receiving benefits under Medicaid, including the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), Foster Care, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicare (Special Needs Plans). The Company operates health plans in Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, New Jersey, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas and Wisconsin. In addition, the Company contracts with other healthcare and commercial organizations to provide specialty services including behavioral health, life and health management, long-term care, managed vision, nurse triage, pharmacy benefits management and treatment compliance. Information regarding Centene is available via the Internet at www.centene.com.

Source: Centene Corporation

<https://investors.centene.com/2008-10-29-Centene-Corporation-Kicks-off-Campaign-to-Educate-Members-on-Flu-Prevention-and-Proper-Use-of-Antibiotics>