

December 13, 2001



Centene Corporation Commences Initial Public Offering

ST. LOUIS--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Dec. 13, 2001--Centene Corporation (Nasdaq:CNTE) today announced the commencement of an initial public offering of 3,500,000 shares of its common stock at a price of \$14 per share through underwriters led by SG Cowen Securities Corporation, Thomas Weisel Partners LLC and CIBC World Markets Corp. Of the shares being offered, 3,250,000 shares are being sold by Centene and 250,000 shares are being sold by a stockholder. The common stock will trade on the Nasdaq National Market under the symbol "CNTE". Centene intends to use its proceeds of the offering to repay \$4.0 million of subordinated notes and for general corporate purposes, including working capital and potential acquisitions.

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

The offer of these securities will be made only by means of a written prospectus, a copy of which may be obtained from SG Cowen Securities Corporation through ADP, 55 Mercedes Way, Edgewood, New York 11717 (631/254-7106) or Thomas Weisel Partners LLC, 390 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10022 (212/271-3700). This press release shall not constitute an offer to sell or a solicitation of an offer to buy, nor shall there be a sale of these securities, in any state or jurisdiction in which such an offer, solicitation or sale would be unlawful prior to registration or qualification under the securities laws of any such state or jurisdiction.

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