

# FORM 4

**UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**  
**Washington, D.C. 20549**

|                                                |           |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| OMB APPROVAL                                   |           |
| OMB Number:                                    | 3235-0287 |
| Estimated average burden hours per response... | 0.5       |

Check this box if no longer subject to Section 16. Form 4 or Form 5 obligations may continue. See Instruction 1(b).

## STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP OF SECURITIES

Filed pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 or Section 30(h) of the Investment Company Act of 1940

(Print or Type Responses)

|                                                                        |  |                                                                                         |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Name and Address of Reporting Person *<br><b>DROZDA JOSEPH P JR</b> |  | 2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol<br><b>CENTENE CORP [CNC]</b>                |  | 5. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer (Check all applicable)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Director <input type="checkbox"/> 10% Owner<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Officer (give title below) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify below)<br><b>Executive VP Operations</b> |  |
| (Last) (First) (Middle)<br><b>7711 CARONDELET AVENUE, SUITE 800</b>    |  | 3. Date of Earliest Transaction (Month/Day/Year)<br><b>07/29/2004</b>                   |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |
| (Street)<br><b>ST. LOUIS, MO 63105</b>                                 |  | 4. If Amendment, Date Original Filed(Month/Day/Year)                                    |  | 6. Individual or Joint/Group Filing(Check Applicable Line)<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Form filed by One Reporting Person<br><input type="checkbox"/> Form filed by More than One Reporting Person                                                                                      |  |
| (City) (State) (Zip)                                                   |  | <b>Table I - Non-Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned</b> |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |

| 1. Title of Security (Instr. 3) | 2. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year) | 2A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year) | 3. Transaction Code (Instr. 8) |   | 4. Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5) |            |             | 5. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned Following Reported Transaction(s) (Instr. 3 and 4) | 6. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4) | 7. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 4) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
|                                 |                                      |                                                    | Code                           | V | Amount                                                            | (A) or (D) | Price       |                                                                                               |                                                          |                                                       |
| Common Stock                    | 07/29/2004                           |                                                    | S                              |   | 4,356<br><u>(1)</u>                                               | D          | \$<br>38.85 | 15,231                                                                                        | D                                                        |                                                       |

Reminder: Report on a separate line for each class of securities beneficially owned directly or indirectly.

**Persons who respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB control number.** SEC 1474 (9-02)

**Table II - Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned (e.g., puts, calls, warrants, options, convertible securities)**

| 1. Title of Derivative Security (Instr. 3) | 2. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security | 3. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year) | 3A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year) | 4. Transaction Code (Instr. 8) |   | 6. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date (Month/Day/Year) |     | 7. Title and Amount of Underlying Securities (Instr. 3 and 4) | 8. Price of Derivative Security (Instr. 5) | 9. Number of Derivative Securities Beneficially Owned Following Reported Transaction(s) (Instr. 4) | 10. Ownership Form of Derivative Security: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4) | 11. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 4) |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|----------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
|                                            |                                                        |                                      |                                                    | Code                           | V | (A)                                                      | (D) |                                                               |                                            |                                                                                                    |                                                                                  |                                                        |

## Reporting Owners

| Reporting Owner Name / Address                                                   | Relationships |           |                         |       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------------|-------|
|                                                                                  | Director      | 10% Owner | Officer                 | Other |
| DROZDA JOSEPH P JR<br>7711 CARONDELET AVENUE<br>SUITE 800<br>ST. LOUIS, MO 63105 |               |           | Executive VP Operations |       |

## Signatures

|                                                |                     |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| /s/ Joseph P. Drozda                           | 08/02/2004          |
| <small>**Signature of Reporting Person</small> | <small>Date</small> |

## Explanation of Responses:

\* If the form is filed by more than one reporting person, *see* Instruction 4(b)(v).

\*\* Intentional misstatements or omissions of facts constitute Federal Criminal Violations. *See* 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 15 U.S.C. 78ff(a).

(1) Sale pursuant to a 10b5-1 Plan established March 12, 2004

Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space is insufficient, *see* Instruction 6 for procedure.

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