

## INITIAL STATEMENT OF 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* <b>SCHEFFEL WILLIAM</b> (Last) (First) (Middle) <b>C/O CENTENE CORPORATION, 7711 CARONDELET, SUITE 800</b> (Street) <b>ST. LOUIS, MO 63105</b> (City) (State) (Zip)	2. Date of Event Requiring Statement (Month/Day/Year) <b>12/16/2003</b>	3. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol <b>CENTENE CORP [CNC]</b>		
		4. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer (Check all applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> Director <input type="checkbox"/> 10% Owner <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Officer (give title below) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify below) <b>Senior VP Controller</b>		5. If Amendment, Date Original Filed (Month/Day/Year)
		6. Individual or Joint/Group Filing (Check Applicable Line) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Form filed by One Reporting Person <input type="checkbox"/> Form filed by More than One Reporting Person		

### Table I - Non-Derivative Securities Beneficially Owned

1. Title of Security (Instr. 4)	2. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned (Instr. 4)	3. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 5)	4. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 5)
Common Stock	300	D	

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

SEC 1473 (7-02)

**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.**

### Table II - Derivative Securities Beneficially Owned (e.g., puts, calls, warrants, options, convertible securities)

1. Title of Derivative Security (Instr. 4)	2. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date (Month/Day/Year)		3. Title and Amount of Securities Underlying Derivative Security (Instr. 4)		4. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security	5. Ownership Form of Derivative Security: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 5)	6. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 5)
	Date Exercisable	Expiration Date	Title	Amount or Number of Shares			
Common Stock Option (right to buy)	12/01/2004 <sup>(1)</sup>	12/01/2014	Common Stock	25,000	\$30.7	D	

## Reporting Owners

Reporting Owner Name / Address	Relationships			
	Director	10% Owner	Officer	Other
SCHEFFEL WILLIAM C/O CENTENE CORPORATION 7711 CARONDELET, SUITE 800 ST. LOUIS, MO 63105			Senior VP Controller	

## Signatures

/s/ WILLIAM N. SCHEFFEL	12/18/2003
<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 5(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) The options vests in 5 equal annual installments on the anniversary of the grant date beginning on December 1, 2004.

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

Potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB number.