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**UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20549**

FORM 5

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP

**Filed pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934,
Section 17(a) of the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935 or
Section 30(h) of the Investment Company Act of 1940**

- ☐ Check box if no longer
subject to Section 16.
Form 4 or Form 5
obligations may continue.
See Instruction 1(b).
- ☐ Form 3 Holdings Reported
- ☐ Form 4 Transactions Reported

1. Name and Address of Reporting Person* Ditmore Robert _____ <i>(Last) (First) (Middle)</i> c/o Centene Corporation 7711 Carondelet Avenue, Suite 800 _____ <i>(Street)</i> St. Louis MO 63105 _____ <i>(City) (State) (Zip)</i>	2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol Centene Corporation (CNTE) _____ 4. Statement for Month/Year December 31, 2002 _____ 6. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer (Check All Applicable) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Director <input type="checkbox"/> 10% Owner <input type="checkbox"/> Officer <i>(give title below)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(specify below)</i> _____	3. I.R.S. Identification Number of Reporting Person, if an entity (Voluntary) _____ 5. If Amendment, Date of Original (Month/Year) _____ 7. Individual or Joint/Group Reporting (Check Applicable Line) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Form filed by One Reporting Person <input type="checkbox"/> Form filed by More than One Reporting Person
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* If the form is filed by more than one reporting person, see instruction 4(b)(v).

Table I — Non-Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned

1. Title of Security <i>(Instr. 3)</i>	2. Transaction Date <i>(Month/Day/Year)</i>	2A. Deemed Execution Date, if any <i>(Month/Day/Year)</i>	3. Transaction Code <i>(Instr. 8)</i>	4. Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) <i>(Instr. 3, 4 and 5)</i>	5. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned at the End of Issuer's Fiscal Year <i>(Instr. 3 and 4)</i>	6. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) <i>(Instr. 4)</i>	7. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership <i>(Instr. 4)</i>
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(A)
or
(D) Price

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)	5. Number of Derivative Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5)
					(A) (D)
Employee Stock Option (right to buy)	\$22.71	7/24/02		A	7,500

Table II — Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned — Continued
(e.g., puts, calls, warrants, options, convertible securities)[illegible]

Explanation of Responses:

(1) The option becomes fully exercisable on the date of Centene Corporation's 2004 Annual Meeting.

By: Karey L. Witty

****Signature of Reporting Person
Attorney-in-Fact**

February 12, 2003

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

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