

CENTENE CORP
Form S-3ASR
May 13, 2011

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As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on May 13, 2011
Registration Statement No. 333-

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

Form S-3

REGISTRATION STATEMENT
UNDER
THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

Centene Corporation

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware

*(State or other jurisdiction of
incorporation or organization)*

42-1406317

*(IRS Employer
Identification Number)*

7700 Forsyth Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63105
(314) 725-4477

(Address, including zip code, and telephone number, including area code, of registrant's principal executive offices)

Keith H. Williamson
Centene Corporation
7700 Forsyth Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63105
(314) 725-4477

(Name, address, including zip code, and telephone number, including area code, of agent for service)

Copies to:

J. Mark Klamer, Esq.
Bryan Cave LLP
One Metropolitan Square
211 North Broadway, Suite 3600
St. Louis, Missouri 63102
(314) 259-2000
Fax: (314) 259-2020

Approximate date of commencement of proposed sale to the public: From time to time after the Registration Statement becomes effective.

If the only securities being registered on this Form are being offered pursuant to dividend or interest reinvestment plans, please check the following box:

If any of the securities being registered on this Form are to be offered on a delayed or continuous basis pursuant to Rule 415 under the Securities Act of 1933, other than securities offered only in connection with dividend or interest reinvestment plans, check the following box:

If this Form is filed to register additional securities for an offering pursuant to Rule 462(b) under the Securities Act, please check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

If this Form is a post-effective amendment filed pursuant to Rule 462(c) under the Securities Act, check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

If this Form is a registration statement pursuant to General Instruction I.D. or a post-effective amendment thereto that shall become effective upon filing with the Commission pursuant to Rule 462(e) under the Securities Act, check the following box.

If this Form is a post-effective amendment to a registration statement filed pursuant to General Instruction I.D. filed to register securities or additional classes of securities pursuant to Rule 413(b) under the Securities Act, check the following box.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, or a smaller reporting company. See the definitions of large accelerated filer, accelerated filer and smaller reporting company in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act. (Check one):

Large accelerated filer Accelerated filer Non-accelerated filer Smaller reporting company
 (Do not check if a smaller reporting company)

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

| Title of Each Class of Securities to be Registered | Amount to be Registered/Proposed Maximum Offering Price per Unit/ Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price | Amount of Registration Fee |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| Debt Securities | (1) | \$0(1),(2) |

(1) An indeterminate aggregate initial offering price and number or amount of the securities is being registered as may from time to time be issued at indeterminate prices.

(2) In accordance with Rules 456(b) and 457(r), the registrant is deferring payment of all of the registration fee.

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PROSPECTUS

**Centene Corporation
Debt Securities**

We may offer and sell from time to time debt securities in amounts, at prices and on terms that we will determine at the times of the offerings. We will provide specific terms of any offering in supplements to this prospectus. The supplements may add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. You should read this prospectus and any prospectus supplement carefully before you invest.

We may offer debt securities for sale directly to purchasers or through underwriters, dealers or agents to be designated at a future date. The supplements to this prospectus will provide the names of any underwriters, the specific terms of the plan of distribution and the underwriter's discounts and commissions. This prospectus may not be used to sell securities unless accompanied by a prospectus supplement.

Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange (the NYSE) under the symbol CNC.

Investing in our securities involves risks. See Risk Factors beginning on page 1 of this prospectus.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or passed upon the accuracy or adequacy of this prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The date of this prospectus is May 13, 2011

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You should rely only on information provided or incorporated by reference in this prospectus or any applicable prospectus supplement. No dealer, salesperson or other person is authorized to give you any information or to represent anything not contained in this prospectus. You must not rely on any unauthorized information or representations. This prospectus is an offer to sell only the debt securities offered hereby, but only under circumstances and in jurisdictions where it is lawful to do so. The information contained in this prospectus is current only as of its date.

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ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of an automatic shelf registration statement on Form S-3 that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC, as a well-known seasoned issuer as defined in Rule 405 under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the Securities Act). Under this shelf registration process, we may, from time to time, sell the securities described in this prospectus in one or more offerings. For further information about our business and the securities, you should refer to the registration statement and its exhibits. The exhibits to our registration statement contain the full text of certain contracts and other important documents we have summarized in this prospectus. Since these summaries may not contain all the information that you may find important in deciding whether to purchase the securities we offer, you should review the full text of these documents. The registration statement and the exhibits can be obtained from the SEC as indicated under the heading **Where You Can Find More Information**.

This prospectus provides you with a general description of our debt securities. Each time we offer debt securities, we will provide you with a prospectus supplement and/or other offering material that will contain specific information about the terms of that offering. When we refer to a prospectus supplement, we are also referring to any free writing prospectus or other offering material authorized by us. The prospectus supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. If there is any inconsistency between the information in this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement, you should rely on the information in the prospectus supplement. You should read this prospectus and any prospectus supplement together with additional information described under the heading **Incorporation By Reference**.

You should rely only on the information provided in this prospectus, in any prospectus supplement, or any other offering material that we authorize, including the information incorporated by reference. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with different information. You should not assume that the information in this prospectus, any supplement to this prospectus, or any other offering material that we authorize, is accurate at any date other than the date indicated on the cover page of these documents or the date of the statement contained in any incorporated documents, respectively. This prospectus is not an offer to sell or a solicitation of an offer to buy any securities other than the securities referred to in the prospectus supplement. This prospectus is not an offer to sell or a solicitation of an offer to buy such securities in any circumstances in which such offer or solicitation is unlawful. You should not interpret the delivery of this prospectus, or any sale of securities, as an indication that there has been no change in our affairs since the date of this prospectus. You should also be aware that information in this prospectus may change after this date. Unless the context otherwise requires, in this prospectus **Centene**, **we**, **us**, **our** and **ours** refer to Centene Corporation and its consolidated subsidiaries.

RISK FACTORS

Investing in our securities involves risks. You should carefully consider the risks described under **Risk Factors** in Item 1A of Part II of our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the period ended March 31, 2011, filed with the SEC on April 26, 2011, and under **Risk Factors** in Item 1A of Part I of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2010, filed with the SEC on February 22, 2011, and in the other documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus (which risk factors are incorporated by reference herein), as well as the additional risk factors and other information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus or in any prospectus supplement hereto before making a decision to invest in our securities. See **Incorporation By Reference**.

CENTENE CORPORATION

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We are a diversified, multi-line healthcare enterprise operating in two segments: Medicaid Managed Care and Specialty Services. Our Medicaid Managed Care segment provides Medicaid and Medicaid-related health plan coverage to individuals through government subsidized programs, including Medicaid, the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, Foster Care, Medicare Special Needs Plans and the Supplemental Security Income Program, also known as the Aged, Blind or Disabled Program, or collectively ABD.

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Our health plans in Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Mississippi, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas and Wisconsin are included in the Medicaid Managed Care segment. As of March 31, 2011, Medicaid accounted for 76% of our at-risk membership, while CHIP (also including Foster Care) and ABD (also including Medicare) accounted for 14% and 8%, respectively. Hybrid programs represent the remaining 2% at-risk membership. Our Specialty Services segment offers products for behavioral health, health insurance exchanges, individual health insurance, life and health management, long-term care programs, managed vision, telehealth services, and pharmacy benefits management to state programs, healthcare organizations, employer groups and other commercial organizations, as well as to our own subsidiaries. Our health plans in Arizona, operated by our long-term care company, and Massachusetts, operated by our individual health insurance provider, are included in the Specialty Services segment.

Our at-risk managed care membership totaled approximately 1.5 million as of March 31, 2011. For the year ended December 31, 2010, our revenues and net earnings from continuing operations were \$4.4 billion and \$90.9 million, respectively, and our total cash flow from operations was \$168.9 million. For the three months ended March 31, 2011 our revenues, net earnings from continuing operations and cash flow from operations were \$1.2 billion, \$23.7 million and \$94.0 million, respectively.

We provide member focused services through locally based staff by assisting in accessing care, coordinating referrals to related health and social services and addressing member concerns and questions. We also provide education and outreach, programs to inform and assist members in accessing quality, appropriate healthcare services. We believe our local approach to managing our health plans, including provider and member services, enables us to provide accessible, quality, culturally sensitive healthcare coverage to our communities. Our health management, educational and other initiatives are designed to help members best utilize the healthcare system to ensure they receive appropriate, medically necessary services and effective management of routine, severe and chronic health problems resulting in better health outcomes. We combine our decentralized local approach for care with a centralized infrastructure of support functions such as finance, information systems and claims processing.

Our initial health plan commenced operations in Wisconsin in 1984. We were organized in Wisconsin in 1993 as a holding company for our initial health plan and reincorporated in Delaware in 2001. Our corporate office is located at 7700 Forsyth Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63105, and our telephone number is (314) 725-4477.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. You may read and copy any document we file at the SEC's Public Reference Room, 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on their public reference room. Our SEC filings are also available to the public at the SEC's website at <http://www.sec.gov>. Our common stock is listed under the symbol **CNC** and traded on the NYSE. You may also inspect the information we file with the SEC at the NYSE's offices at 20 Broad Street, New York, New York 10005. Information about us, including our SEC filings, is also available at our Internet site at <http://www.centene.com>. However, the information on our Internet site is not a part of this prospectus or any prospectus supplement.

INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference information into this prospectus. This means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to another document filed separately with the SEC. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be a part of this prospectus, and later information that we file with the SEC will automatically update and supersede this information. We incorporate by reference the documents listed below and any future filings made with the SEC under Section 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (other than the portions provided pursuant to Item 2.02 or Item 7.01 of Form 8-K or other information furnished to the

SEC) after the date of this prospectus and before the end of the offering of the securities pursuant to this prospectus (SEC File No. 001-31826):

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our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2010, filed with the SEC on February 22, 2011;

our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the period ended March 31, 2011, filed with the SEC on April 26, 2011;

our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on April 26, 2011 and April 28, 2011 (except with respect to Item 2.02); and

our Definitive Proxy Statement on Schedule 14A filed with the SEC on March 11, 2011.

We encourage you to read our SEC reports, as they provide additional information about us which prudent investors find important. We will provide to each person, including any beneficial owner, to whom a prospectus is delivered, a copy of any or all of the information that has been incorporated by reference in the prospectus but not delivered with the prospectus at no charge upon request by contacting us at Centene Corporation, Attn: Corporate Secretary, 7700 Forsyth Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63105, telephone (314) 725-4477.

USE OF PROCEEDS

Unless we specify another use in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will use the net proceeds from the sale of any securities offered by us for general corporate purposes. Such general corporate purposes may include working capital additions, investments in or extensions of credit to our subsidiaries, capital expenditures, stock repurchases, debt repayment or financing for acquisitions. Pending such use, the proceeds may be invested temporarily in short-term, interest-bearing, investment-grade securities or similar assets.

CAUTIONARY STATEMENT ON FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

All statements, other than statements of current or historical fact, contained in this filing are forward-looking statements. We have attempted to identify these statements by terminology including believe, anticipate, plan, expect, estimate, intend, seek, target, goal, may, will, should, can, continue and other similar words or expressions in connection with, among other things, any discussion of future operating or financial performance. In particular, these statements include statements about our market opportunity, our growth strategy, competition, expected activities and future acquisitions, investments and the adequacy of our available cash resources. Readers are cautioned that matters subject to forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks and uncertainties, including economic, regulatory, competitive and other factors that may cause our or our industry's actual results, levels of activity, performance or achievements to be materially different from any future results, levels of activity, performance or achievements expressed or implied by these forward-looking statements. These statements are not guarantees of future performance and are subject to risks, uncertainties and assumptions.

All forward-looking statements included or incorporated by reference in this prospectus are based on information available to us on the date of this prospectus. Actual results may differ from projections or estimates due to a variety of important factors, including:

our ability to accurately predict and effectively manage health benefits and other operating expenses;

competition;

changes in healthcare practices;

changes in federal or state laws or regulations;

inflation;

provider contract changes;

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new technologies;

reduction in provider payments by governmental payors;

major epidemics;

disasters and numerous other factors affecting the delivery and cost of healthcare;

the expiration, cancellation or suspension of our Medicaid managed care contracts by state governments;

availability of debt and equity financing, on terms that are favorable to us; and

general economic and market conditions.

The risk factors set forth or incorporated by reference above in the section entitled "Risk Factors" contain a further discussion of these and other important factors that could cause actual results to differ from expectations. We disclaim any current intention or obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise. Due to these important factors and risks, we cannot give assurances with respect to our future premium levels or our ability to control our future medical costs.

DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

The following description of the terms of our debt securities sets forth general terms that may apply to the debt securities. The particular terms of any debt securities will be described in the prospectus supplement relating to those debt securities. For purposes of this description of debt securities, the terms "we," "our," "ours," and "us" refer only to Centene Corporation and not to any of its subsidiaries.

The Indenture

The debt securities will be issued in one or more series under an indenture (the "Indenture" or an "indenture"), between us and The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A., as trustee. The statements herein relating to the debt securities and the indenture are summaries and are subject to the detailed provisions of the indenture. The indenture will be subject to and governed by the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended. The description below is a summary and does not contain all the information you may find useful. We urge you to read the indenture because it, and not this summary, defines many of your rights as a holder of our debt securities. The form of the indenture has been filed as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part.

General

The debt securities will be our general obligations. Subject to certain limitations contained therein, the indenture does not limit the aggregate amount of debt securities which we may issue. We may issue senior or subordinated debt securities under the indenture up to the aggregate principal amount authorized by our board of directors from time to time. The debt securities may be issued in one or more series.

The senior debt securities will rank equally with all our other unsubordinated obligations. The subordinated debt securities will be subordinated and junior in right of payment to all our present and future senior indebtedness to the extent and in the manner set forth in the indenture. We expect from time to time to incur additional indebtedness constituting secured indebtedness. Our outstanding secured indebtedness would effectively rank senior to our senior

unsecured indebtedness to the extent of the value of such security, and our outstanding short- and long-term indebtedness would rank equally with our senior unsecured debt securities.

As of March 31, 2011, we had \$305.0 million of outstanding indebtedness. We will disclose material changes to these amounts in any prospectus supplement relating to an offering of our debt securities.

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The applicable prospectus supplement relating to the particular series of debt securities will describe specific terms of the debt securities offered thereby, including, some or all of the following where applicable:

the title and any limit on the aggregate principal amount of the debt securities, the ability to issue additional debt securities of the same series and whether the debt securities will be senior or subordinated;

the price at which we are offering the debt securities, usually expressed as a percentage of the principal amount;

whether the debt securities will be secured or unsecured;

the date or dates on which the debt securities of a series will be issued, and on which the principal of and any premium on such debt securities, or any installments thereof, will mature or the method of determining such date or dates;

the rate or rates, which may be fixed or variable at which such debt securities will bear interest or the method of calculating such rate or rates, if any;

the date or dates from which any interest will accrue or the method of determining such dates;

the date or dates on which any interest will be payable and the applicable record dates;

the place or places where principal of, premium, if any, and interest, if any, on such debt securities, or installments thereof, if any, will be payable;

whether payments on the debt securities will be payable in foreign currency or currency units or another form, and whether payments on the debt securities will be payable by reference to any index or formula;

any of our obligations to redeem, repay, purchase or offer to purchase the debt securities pursuant to any mandatory redemption, sinking fund or analogous provisions or upon other conditions or at the option of the holders of the debt securities and the periods, prices and the other terms and conditions of such redemption or repurchase, in whole or in part;

if the rights evidenced by the debt securities to be issued may be materially limited or qualified by the rights of any other class of securities, material information about the rights of holders of such other securities;

any of our rights to redeem the debt securities at our option and the periods, prices and the other terms and conditions of such redemption, in whole or in part;

the denominations in which such debt securities will be issued;

whether the debt securities are original issue discount securities and the amount of discount;

the provisions for payment of additional amounts or tax redemptions, if any;

any events of default, covenants or restrictions on us or our subsidiaries specified in the indenture with respect to such debt securities;

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the designation, if any, of any depositaries, trustees, paying agents, authenticating agents, security registrars or other agents with respect to the debt securities of such series;

any terms upon which the holders may convert or exchange debt securities into or for our debt securities or other securities or property of us or another issuer;

any restrictions or other provisions relating to the transfer or exchange of the debt securities;

if other than the entire principal amount, the portion of the principal amount of debt securities which becomes payable upon a declaration of acceleration of maturity or the method of determining such portion;

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in the case of the subordinated debt securities, provisions relating to any modification of the subordination provisions;

securities exchange(s) on which the securities will be listed, if any;

whether any underwriter(s) will act as market maker(s) for the securities;

the extent to which a secondary market for the securities is expected to develop;

provisions related to limits or restrictions on consolidation, merger, conveyance, sale of assets and other transfers by us and our subsidiaries, to the extent applicable;

provisions relating to discharge and covenant defeasance and legal defeasance and any additional means of defeasance of the debt securities, any conditions or limitations to defeasance of the debt securities;

provisions relating to satisfaction and discharge of the indenture;

provisions relating to form, registration, exchange and transfer;

the designation of agents with respect to the debt securities;

modification, waiver and amendment provisions, including consent of holders requirements associated with these, if any;

material federal income tax considerations, if applicable; and

any other terms of the debt securities, whether in addition to, or by modification or deletion of, the terms described herein.

Debt securities we sell may bear no interest or may bear interest at a rate that at the time of issuance is above or below market rates.

Governing Law

The laws of the State of New York will govern each indenture and will govern the debt securities without giving effect to applicable principles of conflicts of law to the extent that the application of the law of another jurisdiction would be required thereby.

Regarding the Trustee

The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A. will act as trustee under the indenture. From time to time, we may also enter into other banking or other relationships with The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A. or its affiliates.

Global Debt Securities

We may specify in a prospectus supplement for a particular series of debt securities that each series of debt securities will be issued in whole or in part in global form and will be deposited with, or on behalf of, a depositary identified in

the prospectus supplement relating to that series. We may issue global debt securities in either temporary or permanent form. Global securities will be registered in the name of the depositary or its nominee, which will be the sole direct holder of the global securities. Any person wishing to own a debt security must do so indirectly through an account with a broker, bank or other financial institution that, in turn, has an account with the depositary. We will describe in the prospectus supplement the terms of any depository arrangement and the rights and limitations of owners of beneficial interests in any global debt security.

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PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We may sell any of the securities being offered by this prospectus in any one or more of the following ways from time to time:

through agents or dealers;

to or through underwriters;

directly by us to purchasers; or

through a combination of any of these methods.

We will describe the details of any such offering and the plan of distribution for any securities offering in a prospectus supplement.

Offered securities may also be offered and sold, if so indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, in connection with a remarketing upon their purchase, in accordance with a redemption or repayment pursuant to their terms, or otherwise, by one or more remarketing firms, acting as principals for their own accounts or as agents for us. Any remarketing firm will be identified and the terms of its agreements, if any, with us, and any related compensation arrangements contemplated thereby will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Underwriters, dealers and agents that participate in the distribution of our securities may be underwriters as defined in the Securities Act and any discounts or commissions they receive from us and any profit on their resale of the securities may be treated as underwriting discounts and commissions under the Securities Act. We will identify in the applicable prospectus supplement any underwriters, dealers or agents and will describe their compensation. We may have agreements with the underwriters, dealers and agents to indemnify them against specified civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act. Underwriters, dealers and agents may engage in transactions with or perform services for us or our subsidiaries in the ordinary course of their businesses.

LEGAL MATTERS

The validity of the securities offered hereby will be passed upon for us by Bryan Cave LLP, St. Louis, Missouri.

EXPERTS

The consolidated financial statements of Centene Corporation as of December 31, 2010 and 2009, and for each of the years in the three-year period ended December 31, 2010, and management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2010 (which is included in Management's Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting) have been incorporated by reference herein in reliance upon the reports of KPMG LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, incorporated by reference herein, and upon the authority of said firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

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PART II

INFORMATION NOT REQUIRED IN PROSPECTUS

Item 14. Other Expenses of Issuance and Distribution.

The following table sets forth the estimated expenses in connection with the issuance and distribution of the securities being registered, other than underwriting discounts and commissions.

| |
|--|
| SEC Registration Fee(1) |
| Accounting Fees and Expenses(2) |
| Legal Fees and Expenses(2) |
| Federal and State Taxes(2) |
| Fees and Expenses of Trustee and its Counsel |
| Printing and Engraving Expenses(2) |
| Miscellaneous Expenses(2) |
| Total |

- (1) Omitted because the registration fee is being deferred pursuant to Rule 456(b) and 457(r).
- (2) Because an indeterminate amount of securities are covered by this registration statement, the expenses in connection with the issuance and distribution of securities cannot be estimated.

Item 15. Indemnification of Officers and Directors.

Section 102 of the General Corporation Law of the State of Delaware, as amended (the DGCL or Delaware law), allows a corporation to eliminate or limit the personal liability of a director of a corporation to the corporation or its stockholders for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty as a director, except where the director breached his duty of loyalty, failed to act in good faith, engaged in intentional misconduct or knowingly violated a law, authorized the payment of a dividend or approved a stock repurchase in violation of Delaware corporate law or obtained an improper personal benefit.

Section 145 of the DGCL provides, among other things, that we may indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding (other than an action by us or in our right) by reason of the fact that the person is or was one of our directors, officers, agents or employees or is or was serving at our request as a director, officer, agent, or employee of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, against expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by the person in connection with such action, suit or proceeding. The power to indemnify applies (a) if such person is successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit or proceeding, or (b) if such person acted in good faith and in a manner which the person reasonably believed to be in our best interest, or not opposed to our best interest, and with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe such conduct was unlawful. The power to indemnify applies to actions brought by us or in our right as well but only to the extent of defense expenses (including attorneys' fees but excluding amounts paid in settlement) actually and reasonably incurred and not to any satisfaction of judgment or settlement of the claim itself, and with the further limitation that in such actions no indemnification shall be made in the event of any adjudication of negligence or misconduct in the performance of his duties to us, unless the court believes that in light of all the circumstances indemnification should apply.

Section 174 of the DGCL provides, among other things, that a director, who willfully or negligently approves of an unlawful payment of dividends or an unlawful stock purchase or redemption, may be held liable for such actions. A director who was either absent when the unlawful actions were approved or dissented at the time, may avoid liability by causing his or her dissent to such actions to be entered in the books containing the minutes of the meetings of the board of directors at the time such action occurred or immediately after such absent director receives notice of the unlawful acts.

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As permitted under Delaware law, our certificate of incorporation includes a provision that eliminates the personal liability of our directors for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty as a director, except for liability for:

- any breach of the director's duty of loyalty to us or our stockholders;
- acts or omissions not in good faith or that involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law;
- unlawful payments of dividends or unlawful stock re-purchases or redemptions; or
- any transaction from which the director derived an improper personal benefit.

Our by-laws further provide that:

- we must indemnify our directors and officers to the fullest extent permitted by Delaware law;
- we may indemnify our other employees and agents to the same extent that we indemnified our officers and directors, unless otherwise determined by our board of directors; and
- we must advance expenses, as incurred, to our directors and executive officers in connection with a legal proceeding to the fullest extent permitted by Delaware law.

The indemnification provisions contained in our certificate of incorporation and by-laws are not exclusive of any other rights to which a person may be entitled by law, agreement, vote of stockholders or disinterested directors or otherwise. In addition, we maintain general liability insurance on behalf of our directors and executive officers insuring them against any liability asserted against them based on acts or omissions in their capacities as directors or officers or arising out of such status.

Item 16. Exhibits

A list of exhibits filed herewith or incorporated by reference herein is contained in the Exhibit Index which is incorporated herein by reference.

Item 17. Undertakings.

The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes:

(1) to file, during any period in which offers or sales are being made, a post-effective amendment to this registration statement:

(i) to include any prospectus required by section 10(a)(3) of the Securities Act;

(ii) to reflect in the prospectus any facts or events arising after the effective date of the registration statement (or the most recent post-effective amendment thereof) which, individually or in the aggregate, represent a fundamental change in the information set forth in the registration statement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any increase or decrease in volume of securities offered (if the total dollar value of securities offered would not exceed that which was registered) and any deviation from the low or high end of the estimated maximum offering range may be reflected in the form of prospectus filed with the Commission pursuant to Rule 424(b) if, in the aggregate, the changes in volume and price represent no more than a 20 percent change in the maximum aggregate offering price set forth in the Calculation of Registration Fee table in the effective registration statement; and

(iii) to include any material information with respect to the plan of distribution not previously disclosed in the registration statement or any material change to such information in the registration statement;

provided, however, that: paragraphs (i), (ii) and (iii) above do not apply if the information required to be included in a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in reports filed with or furnished to the Commission by the registrant pursuant to section 13 or section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 that are incorporated by reference in the registration statement, or is contained in a form of prospectus filed pursuant to Rule 424(b) that is part of the registration statement.

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(2) That, for the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act, each such post-effective amendment shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial *bona fide* offering thereof.

(3) To remove from registration by means of a post-effective amendment any of the securities being registered which remain unsold at the termination of the offering.

(4) That, for the purpose of determining liability under the Securities Act to any purchaser:

(A) each prospectus filed by the registrant pursuant to Rule 424(b)(3) shall be deemed to be part of the registration statement as of the date the filed prospectus was deemed part of and included in the registration statement; and

(B) each prospectus required to be filed pursuant to Rule 424(b)(2), (b)(5), or (b)(7) as part of a registration statement in reliance on Rule 430B relating to an offering made pursuant to Rule 415(a)(1)(i), (vii), or (x) for the purpose of providing the information required by section 10(a) of the Securities Act shall be deemed to be part of and included in the registration statement as of the earlier of the date such form of prospectus is first used after effectiveness or the date of the first contract of sale of securities in the offering described in the prospectus. As provided in Rule 430B, for liability purposes of the issuer and any person that is at that date an underwriter, such date shall be deemed to be a new effective date of the registration statement relating to the securities in the registration statement to which that prospectus relates, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial *bona fide* offering thereof. *Provided, however*, that no statement made in a registration statement or prospectus that is part of the registration statement or made in a document incorporated or deemed incorporated by reference into the registration statement or prospectus that is part of the registration statement will, as to a purchaser with a time of contract of sale prior to such effective date, supersede or modify any statement that was made in the registration statement or prospectus that was part of the registration statement or made in any such document immediately prior to such effective date.

(5) That, for the purpose of determining liability of the registrant under the Securities Act to any purchaser in the initial distribution of the securities, in a primary offering of securities of the undersigned registrant pursuant to this registration statement, regardless of the underwriting method used to sell the securities to the purchaser, if the securities are offered or sold to such purchaser by means of any of the following communications, the undersigned registrant will be a seller to the purchaser and will be considered to offer or sell such securities to such purchaser:

(i) any preliminary prospectus or prospectus of the undersigned registrant relating to the offering required to be filed pursuant to Rule 424;

(ii) any free writing prospectus relating to the offering prepared by or on behalf of the undersigned registrant or used or referred to by the undersigned registrant;

(iii) the portion of any other free writing prospectus relating to the offering containing material information about the undersigned registrant or its securities provided by or on behalf of the undersigned registrant; and

(iv) any other communication that is an offer in the offering made by the undersigned registrant to the purchaser.

(6) That, for purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act, each filing of the registrant's annual report pursuant to section 13(a) or section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 that is incorporated by reference in the registration statement shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial *bona fide* offering thereof.

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Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act may be permitted to directors, officers and controlling persons of the registrant pursuant to the foregoing provisions, or otherwise, the registrant has been advised that in the opinion of the Securities and Exchange Commission such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and is, therefore, unenforceable. In the event that a claim for indemnification against such liabilities (other than the payment by the registrant of expenses incurred or paid by a director, officer or controlling person of the registrant in the successful defense of any action, suit or proceeding) is asserted by such director, officer or controlling person in connection with the securities being registered, the registrant will, unless in the opinion of its counsel the matter has been settled by controlling precedent, submit to a court of appropriate jurisdiction the question whether such indemnification by it is against public policy as expressed in the Act and will be governed by the final adjudication of such issue.

Table of Contents**SIGNATURES**

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act, the registrant certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-3 and has duly caused this registration statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized, in the City of Clayton, State of Missouri, on the 13th day of May, 2011.

CENTENE CORPORATION

By: /s/ Michael F. Neidorff

Name: Michael F. Neidorff
Title: Chairman, President and
Chief Executive Officer

Each of the undersigned officers and directors of Centene Corporation, a Delaware corporation (the Corporation), whose signatures appear below hereby makes, constitutes and appoints Michael F. Neidorff and William N. Scheffel, and each of them acting individually, his or her true and lawful attorneys, with power to act alone and without the other and with full power of substitution, to execute, deliver and file (this authorization to include the authority to sign the name of each of the undersigned in the capacity or capacities indicated below) an automatic shelf registration statement on Form S-3 (or other appropriate form) with respect to the registration under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, of an indeterminate amount of the Corporation's Debt Securities (the Securities), which Securities may be offered in amounts, at prices, and on terms to be determined at the time of sale, all as authorized by the Board of Directors (the Registration Statement), and any and all amendments or supplements thereto, and any other instruments deemed necessary or advisable in connection therewith; and each of the undersigned officers and directors hereby grants to each of the attorneys full power and authority to do and perform each and every act and thing whatsoever as each of such attorneys may deem, in his or her sole discretion, necessary or advisable, to carry out fully the intent of this power of attorney to the same extent and with the same effect as each of such officers and directors might or could do personally in his or her capacity or capacities.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act, this registration statement has been signed by the following persons in the capacities and on the dates indicated.

| Signature | Title | Date |
|--|--|--------------|
| /s/ Michael F. Neidorff Michael F. Neidorff | Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer (Principal Executive Officer) | May 13, 2011 |
| /s/ William N. Scheffel William N. Scheffel | Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer (Principal Financial Officer) | May 13, 2011 |
| /s/ Jeffrey A. Schwaneke Jeffrey A. Schwaneke | Vice President, Corporate Controller and Chief Accounting Officer (Principal Accounting Officer) | May 13, 2011 |
| /s/ Richard A. Gephardt | Director | May 13, 2011 |

Richard A. Gephardt

/s/ John R. Roberts

Director

May 13, 2011

John R. Roberts

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| Signature | Title | Date |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| /s/ Pamela A. Joseph Pamela A. Joseph | Director | May 13, 2011 |
| /s/ Tommy G. Thompson Tommy G. Thompson | Director | May 13, 2011 |
| /s/ Robert K. Ditmore Robert K. Ditmore | Director | May 13, 2011 |
| /s/ Fred H. Eppinger Fred H. Eppinger | Director | May 13, 2011 |
| /s/ David L. Steward David L. Steward | Director | May 13, 2011 |

Table of Contents**EXHIBIT INDEX**

| Exhibit Number | Description | Incorporated by Reference Herein Reference | Date Filed |
|-----------------------|--|---|-------------------|
| 1.1 | Underwriting Agreement* | | |
| 3.1 | Certificate of Incorporation of Centene Corporation | Exhibit 3.2 to Form S-1 | October 9, 2001 |
| 3.1a | Certificate of Amendment to Certificate of Incorporation of Centene Corporation, dated November 8, 2001 | Exhibit 3.2a to Form S-1/A | November 13, 2001 |
| 3.1b | Certificate of Amendment to Certificate of Incorporation of Centene Corporation as filed with the Secretary of State of the State of Delaware | Exhibit 3.1b to Form 10-Q | July 26, 2004 |
| 3.2 | By-laws of Centene Corporation | Exhibit 3.4 to Form S-1 | October 9, 2001 |
| 4.1 | Amended and Restated Shareholders Agreement, dated September 23, 1998 | Exhibit 4.2 to Form S-1 | October 9, 2001 |
| 4.2 | Rights Agreement between Centene Corporation and Mellon Investor Services LLC, as Rights Agent, dated August 30, 2002 | Exhibit 4.1 to Form 8-K | August 30, 2002 |
| 4.2a | Amendment No. 1 to Rights Agreement by and between Centene Corporation and Mellon Investor Services LLC, as right agent, dated April 23, 2007. | Exhibit 4.1 to Form 8-K | April 26, 2007 |
| 4.3 | Indenture for the 7 1/4% Senior Notes due 2014 dated March 22, 2007 among Centene Corporation and The Bank of New York Trust Company, N.A., as trustee. | Exhibit 4.3 to Form S-4 | May 11, 2007 |
| 4.4 | Form of Indenture | | |
| 5.1 | Legal Opinion of Bryan Cave LLP | | |
| 12.1 | Statement Regarding Computation of Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges | Exhibit 12.1 to Form 10-Q | April 24, 2011 |
| 23.1 | Consent of Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm | | |
| 23.2 | Consent of Bryan Cave LLP (included in Exhibit 5.1 to this Registration Statement) | | |
| 24.1 | Power of Attorney (incorporated by reference this Registration Statement under Signatures) | | |
| 25.1 | Statement of Eligibility under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended, of The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A., as trustee under the Form of Indenture | | |

* Indicates document to be filed by a post-effective amendment to the registration statement or as an exhibit to a report on Form 8-K or Form 10-Q pursuant to Item 601 of Regulation S-K and incorporated herein by reference.