CENTENE CORP
Form 424B5
April 02, 2013
CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

Title of each class of securities to be registered	Proposed maximum aggregate offering price	Amount of registration fee(2)
Common Stock, par value $.001 per share	$15,300,000	$2,086.92

(1) The information in this Calculation of Registration Fee Table updates, with respect to the securities offered hereby, the information set forth in the Calculation of Registration Fee Table included in the Registrant's Registration Statement on Form S-3 (Registration No. 333-187652), originally filed with the Commission on April 1, 2013.
(2) The registration fee is calculated in accordance with Rules 457(o) and 457(r) under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended.

Filed pursuant to Rule 424(b)(5)
Registration No. 333-187652

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT
(To prospectus dated April 1, 2013)

Centene Corporation
Up to $15,300,000 of Common Stock

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This prospectus supplement and accompanying base prospectus relate to the offer and sale from time to time of shares of our common stock, par value $.001 per share, having an aggregate gross sales price of up to $15,300,000 through Morgan Stanley & Co. LLC as our sales agent. These sales, if any, will be made pursuant to the terms of an sales agreement between us and the sales agent and may be made by means of ordinary brokers' transactions on the New York Stock Exchange or otherwise at market prices prevailing at the time of sale, at prices related to the prevailing market prices or at negotiated prices, in block transactions, or as otherwise agreed upon by us and the sales agent.
The sales agent will receive from us a commission equal to up to one percent of the price of the shares sold through it acting as our sales agent under the sales agreement. The sales agent is not required to sell any specific number or dollar amount of shares of our common stock. Subject to the terms and conditions of the sales agreement, the sales agent will use its commercially reasonable efforts to sell on our behalf any shares of common stock to be offered by us.
The offering of common stock pursuant to the sales agreement will terminate upon the earlier of (1) the sale of all the shares of our common stock subject to the sales agreement, and (2) the termination of the sales agreement, pursuant to its terms, by either the sales agent or us. See “Plan of Distribution” in this prospectus supplement for further information.
The net proceeds that we will receive will be the gross proceeds from such sales, less the commissions and any other costs we may incur in issuing the shares.
Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol “CNC.” The last reported sale price of our common stock on the New York Stock Exchange on March 28, 2013 was $44.04 per share.
Investing in our common stock involves risks that are described in the “Risk Factors” section beginning on page S-3 of this prospectus supplement.
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 supplement or the accompanying prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

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The date of this prospectus supplement is April 1, 2013.

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You should read this document together with additional information described under the heading “Where You Can Find More Information” in the accompanying prospectus. You should rely only on the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. We have not, and Morgan Stanley has not, authorized any other person to provide you with different information. If anyone provides you with different or inconsistent information, you should not rely on it. We are not, and Morgan Stanley is not, making an offer to sell these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted. You should assume that the information appearing in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference is accurate only as of their respective dates. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those dates.

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

This document is comprised of two parts. The first part is the prospectus supplement, which describes the specific terms of this offering and also adds to and updates information contained in the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference. The second part is the accompanying prospectus, which gives more general information, some of which may not apply to this offering. Generally, when we refer to the prospectus, we are referring to both parts of this document combined. To the extent there is a conflict between the information contained in this prospectus supplement, on the one hand, and the information contained in the accompanying prospectus, on the other hand, the information in this prospectus supplement shall control.

Unless the context otherwise requires, the terms the “Company,” “we,” “us,” “our” or similar terms and “Centene” refer to Centene Corporation, together with its consolidated subsidiaries.

This document may only be used where it is legal to sell the shares of common stock. Certain jurisdictions may restrict the distribution of these documents and the offering of the shares of common stock. We require persons receiving these documents to inform themselves about and to observe any such restrictions. We have not taken any action that would permit an offering of the shares of common stock or the distribution of these documents in any jurisdiction that requires such action.

Market and Industry Data

Throughout this prospectus, we rely on and refer to information and statistics regarding the healthcare industry. We obtained this information and these statistics from various third-party sources, discussions with state regulators and our own internal estimates. We believe that these sources and estimates are reliable, but we have not independently verified them and cannot guarantee their accuracy or completeness.

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT SUMMARY

This summary contains basic information about us, our common stock and this offering. Because this is a summary, it does not contain all of the information you should consider before investing in our common stock. You should carefully read this summary together with the more detailed information and financial statements and notes thereto contained elsewhere or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. To fully understand this offering, you should read all of these documents.

OVERVIEW

We are a diversified, multi-line healthcare enterprise that provides programs and services to the rising number of under-insured and uninsured individuals. 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 member and provider 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.

We operate 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 (CHIP), long-term care (LTC), Foster Care, dual eligible individuals in Medicare Special Needs Plans and the Supplemental Security Income Program, also known as the Aged, Blind or Disabled Program, or collectively ABD. As of December 31, 2012, Medicaid accounted for 77% of our at-risk membership, while CHIP (also including Foster Care) and ABD (also including Medicare) accounted for 9% and 12%, respectively. Hybrid programs and long-term care represent the remaining 2% at-risk membership. Our Specialty Services segment offers products for behavioral health, care management software, health insurance exchanges, individual health insurance, life and health management, LTC 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 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 principal executive offices are located at 7700 Forsyth Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63105, and our telephone number is (314) 725-4477. Our website address is www.centene.com. We do not incorporate the information contained on our website into this Prospectus, and you should not consider it part of this Prospectus.

THE OFFERING

For a description of our common stock, see “Description of Capital Stock” in the accompanying prospectus.

Issuer	Centene Corporation
Common stock offered by us	Shares of our common stock having an aggregate gross sales price of up to $15,300,000.
Use of proceeds	We intend to use the net proceeds for general corporate purposes, which may include funding for obligations including the escrow account associated with the AcariaHealth acquisition and related transaction costs, and to the extent that any net proceeds remain after such application, the repayment of indebtedness, capital expenditures and additions to working capital.
Risk factors	See “Risk Factors” and other information included or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus for a discussion of factors you should carefully consider before deciding to invest in our common stock.
New York Stock Exchange symbol	CNC

RISK FACTORS

This prospectus supplement contains “forward-looking” statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, including those incorporated herein by reference from our 2012 Annual Report. These forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties which could cause actual results to differ materially for those in the forward-looking statements. These risks include those described in the “Risk Factors” item of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012 (filed February 19, 2013) which is incorporated by reference in this prospectus.

Investing in our common stock will provide you with an equity ownership in Centene. As one of our stockholders, you will be subject to risks inherent in our business. The trading price of your shares will be affected by the performance of our business relative to, among other things, competition, market conditions and general economic and industry conditions. The value of your investment may decrease, resulting in a loss. You should carefully consider the following factors as well as other information contained in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein before deciding to invest in shares of our common stock.

Risks Related to Our Common Stock

The price of our common stock may be volatile.

During the twelve months ended December 31, 2012, the high sales price per share of our common stock on the NYSE was $50.98 and the low sales price per share was $24.26. The price of our common stock could be subject to wide fluctuations in the future in response to many events or factors, including those discussed in the risk factors incorporated by reference herein, as well as:

- State and federal budget decreases;
- actual or anticipated fluctuations in operating results;
- changes in expectations as to future financial performance or buy/sell recommendations of securities analysts;
- acquisitions, strategic alliances or joint ventures involving us or our competitors;
- actions of our current stockholders, including sales of common stock by our directors and executive officers;
- the arrival or departure of key personnel;
- our, or a competitor's, announcement of new products, services or innovations; and
- the operating and stock price performance of other comparable companies.

General market conditions and domestic or international macroeconomic factors unrelated to our performance may also affect the price of our common stock. For these reasons, investors should not rely on recent trends to predict future prices of our common stock or financial results.

Future issuances of equity or equity-linked securities by us may cause the market price of shares of our common stock to fall.

As of March 28, 2013, we had 52,396,734 shares of our common stock outstanding. The issuance of these new shares, the common stock offered hereby and the sale of additional shares that may become eligible for sale in the public market from time to time upon the exercise of stock options or vesting of equity awards could have the effect of depressing the market price for shares of our common stock.

Our issuance of preferred stock could adversely affect holders of common stock.

Our board of directors is authorized to issue series of preferred stock without any action on the part of our holders of common stock. Our board of directors also has the power, without stockholder approval, to set the terms of any such series of preferred stock that may be issued, including voting rights, dividend rights, preferences over our common stock with respect to dividends or if we liquidate, dissolve or wind up our business and other terms. If we issue preferred stock in the future that has preference over our common stock with respect to the payment of dividends or upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, or if we issue preferred stock with voting rights that dilute the voting power of our common stock, the rights of holders of our common stock or the price of our common stock could be adversely affected.

Our corporate documents and provisions of Delaware law may prevent a change in control or management that stockholders may consider desirable.

Section 203 of the Delaware General Corporation Law, laws of states in which we operate, and our charter and by-laws contain provisions that might enable our management to resist a takeover of our company. These provisions could have

the effect of delaying, deferring, or preventing a change in control of Centene or a change in our management that stockholders may consider favorable or beneficial. These provisions could also discourage proxy contests and make it more difficult for you and other stockholders to elect directors and take other corporate actions. These provisions could also limit the price that investors might be willing to pay in the future for shares of our common stock.

We may not pay cash dividends on our common stock.

We have never declared any cash dividends on our capital stock and currently anticipate that we will retain any future earnings for the development, operation and expansion of our business. The declaration and payment of dividends is at the discretion of our board of directors.

CAUTIONARY STATEMENT ON FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

Statements set forth in this prospectus and incorporated by reference from documents we have filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission may contain forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. Forward-looking statements are not based on historical facts but instead reflect our expectations, estimates or projections concerning future results or events, including, without limitation:

- our ability to accurately predict and effectively manage health benefits and other operating expenses;
- competition;
- membership and revenue projections;
- timing of regulatory contract approval;
- changes in healthcare practices;
- changes in federal or state laws or regulations, including the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the Health Care and Education Affordability Reconciliation Act and any regulations enacted thereunder;
- changes in expected contract start dates;
- changes in expected closing dates for acquisitions;
- inflation;
- provider and state contract changes;
- 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 Medicare or Medicaid managed care contracts by federal or state governments;
- availability of debt and equity financing, on terms that are favorable to us; and
- general economic and market conditions.

These statements generally can be identified by the use of forward-looking words or phrases such as “believe,” “expect,” “anticipate,” “may,” “could,” “intend,” “belief,” “estimate,” “plan,” “likely,” “will,” “should” or other similar words or phrases statements are not guarantees of performance and are inherently subject to known and unknown risks, uncertainties and assumptions that are difficult to predict and could cause our actual results, performance or achievements to differ materially from those expressed in or indicated by those statements. We cannot assure you that any of our expectations, estimates or projections will be achieved. The forward-looking statements included in this document are only made as of the date of this document and we disclaim any obligation to publicly update any forward-looking statement to reflect subsequent events or circumstances.

Because such statements are subject to risks and uncertainties, actual results may differ materially from those expressed or implied by such forward looking statements. See “Risk Factors” beginning on page S-2 of this prospectus supplement for reference to the factors that could cause actual results to differ materially.

You should not place undue reliance on such statements, which speak only as of the date that they were made. These cautionary statements should be considered in connection with any written or oral forward looking statements that we may issue in the future. We do not undertake any obligation to release publicly any revisions to such forward looking statements to reflect later events or circumstances or to reflect the occurrence of unanticipated events.

USE OF PROCEEDS

We intend to use the net proceeds for general corporate purposes, which may include funding for obligations including the escrow account associated with the AcariaHealth acquisition and related transaction costs, and to the extent that any net proceeds remain after such application, the repayment of indebtedness, capital expenditures and additions to working capital.

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We have entered into an sales agreement with Morgan Stanley & Co. LLC, as our sales agent, under which we may issue and sell from time to time shares of our common stock having an aggregate gross sale price of up to $15,300,000.

Upon written instructions from us, the sales agent will offer the shares of our common stock, subject to the terms and conditions of the sales agreement, on a daily basis or as otherwise agreed upon by us and the sales agent. We will designate the maximum amount of shares of common stock to be sold through the sales agent on a daily basis or otherwise determine such maximum amount together with the sales agent. Subject to the terms and conditions of the sales agreement, the sales agent will use its commercially reasonable efforts to sell on our behalf all of the designated shares of common stock so designated or determined. We may instruct the sales agent not to sell shares of common stock if the sales cannot be effected at or above the price designated by us in any such instruction. We or the sales agent may suspend the offering of shares of common stock being made through the sales agent under the sales agreement upon proper notice to the other party.

For its service as sales agent in connection with the sale of shares of our common stock that may be offered hereby, we will pay the sales agent an aggregate fee of up to one percent of the price of the shares sold through it acting as our sales agent under the sales agreement. The sales agent is not required to sell any specific number or dollar amount of shares of our common stock under the sales agreement. The remaining sales proceeds, after deducting any expenses payable by us and any transaction fees imposed by any governmental or regulatory organization in connection with the sales, will equal our net proceeds for the sale of such shares. We estimate that the total expenses from this offering payable by us, excluding compensation payable to the sales agent under the sales agreement, will be approximately $100,000.

Settlement for sales of our common stock will occur, unless the parties agree otherwise, on the third business day following the date on which any sales were made in return for payment of the proceeds to us net of compensation paid by us to the sales agent. There is no arrangement for funds to be received in an escrow, trust or similar arrangement. The shares of common stock offered hereby may be sold on the NYSE or otherwise, at market prices prevailing at the time of sale, at prices related to the prevailing market prices or at negotiated prices.

In connection with the sale of shares of our common stock on our behalf, the sales agent may be deemed to be an “underwriter” within the meaning of the Securities Act of 1933, or the Securities Act, and the compensation paid to the sales agent may be deemed to be underwriting commissions or discounts. We have agreed, under the sales agreement, to provide indemnification and contribution to the sales agent against certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act.

The offering of common stock pursuant to the sales agreement will terminate upon the earlier of (1) the sale of all the shares of our common stock subject to the sales agreement, and (2) the termination of the sales agreement, pursuant to its terms, by either the sales agents or us.

Other Relationships

The sales agent and its affiliates have engaged in, and may in the future engage in, investment banking and other commercial dealings in the ordinary course of business with us, including Morgan Stanley & Co. LLC's role as our financial advisor in connection with our recent acquisition of AcariaHealth. They have received customary fees and commissions for these transactions.

LEGAL MATTERS

The validity of the common stock offered hereby has been passed upon for us by Bryan Cave LLP, St. Louis, Missouri.

PROSPECTUS

Common Stock, $.001 par value

We may offer and sell from time to time shares of our common stock 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 shares of common stock 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, the underwriter's discounts and commissions, and the terms of any overallotment options.

Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol “CNC.” On March 28, 2013 the last sale price of our common stock as reported on the New York Stock Exchange was $44.04 per share.

Investing in our securities involves risk. See “Risk Factors” beginning on page 2 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.

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The date of this prospectus is April 1, 2013

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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. We are offering to sell the shares, and seeking offers to buy the shares, only in jurisdictions where offers and sales are permitted by applicable law. The information contained in this prospectus is current only as of its date.

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of an automatic shelf registration statement 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. Under this automatic shelf registration process, we may, from time to time, sell shares of our common stock as described in this prospectus. For further information about our business and the securities, you should refer to the registration statement and its exhibits. 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 common stock. Each time we offer shares of our common stock, 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 "Where You Can Find More Information."

You should rely only on the information contained and incorporated by reference in this prospectus or in any prospectus supplement. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with information that is different. We are offering to sell the shares, and seeking offers to buy the shares, only in jurisdictions where offers and sales are permitted by applicable law. Neither the delivery of this prospectus nor any sale hereunder shall, under any circumstances, create any implication that there has been no change in our affairs since the date of this prospectus, that the information contained herein is correct as of any time subsequent to the date hereof or that any information incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference herein is correct as of any time subsequent to the date hereof.

Unless the context requires otherwise, in this prospectus the words "CENTENE," "our company," "we," "us," and "our" refer t
Centene Corporation and its consolidated subsidiaries.

CENTENE CORPORATION

We are a diversified, multi-line healthcare enterprise that provides programs and services to the rising number of under-insured and uninsured individuals. 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 member and provider 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.

We operate 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 (CHIP), long-term care (LTC), Foster Care, dual eligible individuals in Medicare Special Needs Plans and the Supplemental Security Income Program, also known as the Aged, Blind or Disabled Program, or collectively ABD. As of December 31, 2012, Medicaid accounted for 77% of our at-risk membership, while CHIP (also including Foster Care) and ABD (also including Medicare) accounted for 9% and 12%, respectively. Hybrid programs and long-term care represent the remaining 2% at-risk membership. Our Specialty Services segment offers products for behavioral health, care management software, health insurance exchanges, individual health insurance, life and health management, LTC 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 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 principal executive offices are located at 7700 Forsyth Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63105, and our telephone number is (314) 725-4477. Our website address is www.centene.com. We do not incorporate the information contained on our website into this Prospectus, and you should not consider it part of this Prospectus.

RISK FACTORS

This prospectus contains “forward-looking” statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, including those incorporated herein by reference from our 2012 Annual Report. These forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties which could cause actual results to differ materially for those in the forward-looking statements. These risks include those described in the “Risk Factors” item of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012 (filed February 19, 2013) which is incorporated by reference in this prospectus.

An investment in our common stock involves a high degree of risk. You should carefully consider the specific factors listed below together with the risk factors incorporated by reference in this prospectus and other information included in this prospectus or incorporated by reference in this prospectus, including our financial statements and related notes, before you decide whether to purchase shares of our common stock. Additional risks and uncertainties, including those that are not yet identified or that we, as of the date of this prospectus, think are immaterial, may also adversely affect our business, results of operations and financial condition. The market price of our common stock could decline due to any of these risks, and you could lose all or part of your investment.

CAUTIONARY STATEMENT REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

Statements set forth in this prospectus and incorporated by reference from documents we have filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission may contain forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. Forward-looking statements are not based on historical facts but instead reflect our expectations, estimates or projections concerning future results or events, including, without limitation:

- our ability to accurately predict and effectively manage health benefits and other operating expenses;
- competition;
- membership and revenue projections;
- timing of regulatory contract approval;
- changes in healthcare practices;
- changes in federal or state laws or regulations, including the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the Health Care and Education Affordability Reconciliation Act and any regulations enacted thereunder;
- changes in expected contract start dates;
- changes in expected closing dates for acquisitions;
- inflation;
- provider and state contract changes;
- 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 Medicare or Medicaid managed care contracts by federal or state governments;
- availability of debt and equity financing, on terms that are favorable to us; and
- general economic and market conditions.

These statements generally can be identified by the use of forward-looking words or phrases such as “believe,” “expect,” “anticipate,” “may,” “could,” “intend,” “belief,” “estimate,” “plan,” “likely,” “will,” “should” or other similar words or phrases statements are not guarantees of performance and are inherently subject to known and unknown risks, uncertainties and assumptions that are difficult to predict and could cause our actual results, performance or achievements to differ materially from those expressed in or indicated by those statements. We cannot assure you that any of our expectations, estimates or projections will be achieved. The forward-looking statements included in this document are only made as of the date of this document and we disclaim any obligation to publicly update any forward-looking statement to reflect subsequent events or circumstances.

Because such statements are subject to risks and uncertainties, actual results may differ materially from those expressed or implied by such forward looking statements. See “Risk Factors” beginning on page 2 of this prospectus for reference to the factors that could cause actual results to differ materially.

You should not place undue reliance on such statements, which speak only as of the date that they were made. These cautionary statements should be considered in connection with any written or oral forward looking statements that we may issue in the future. We do not undertake any obligation to release publicly any revisions to such forward looking statements to reflect later events or circumstances or to reflect the occurrence of unanticipated events.

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 the repayment of indebtedness, funding for acquisitions, capital expenditures, additions to working capital and to meet statutory capital requirements in new or existing states. Pending such use, the proceeds may be invested temporarily in short-term, interest-bearing, investment-grade securities or similar assets.

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
- a combination of any such methods of sale; and
- any other method permitted pursuant to applicable law.

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.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

Because we are subject to the informational requirements of the Exchange Act, we file reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. You may read and copy the registration statement, including the attached exhibits, and any reports, proxy statements or other information that we file at the SEC's public reference room in Washington, D.C. at Room 1580, 100 F Street, N.E., 20549. You can request copies of these documents by writing to the SEC and paying a duplicating charge. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the operation of its public reference rooms in other cities. The SEC makes our filings available to the public on its Internet site (http://www.sec.gov). In addition, you may inspect such reports and other information at the offices of the New York Stock Exchange, 20 Broad Street, New York, New York 10005.

In addition, we make available free of charge through our Internet site (http://www.centene.com) reports we file with the SEC, including our annual reports on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, current reports on Form 8-K and amendments to those reports filed or furnished pursuant to Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Exchange Act, as soon as reasonably practical after we electronically file such material with, or furnish it to, the SEC.

The SEC allows us to "incorporate by reference" information into this prospectus, which means we can disclose important information to you by referring you to other documents that we filed separately with the SEC. You should consider the incorporated information as if we reproduced it in this prospectus, except for any information directly superseded by information subsequently filed with the SEC and incorporated in this prospectus.

We incorporate by reference into this prospectus the following documents (SEC File No. 001-31826), which contain important information about us and our business and financial results:

- our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012;
- our Definitive Proxy Statement on Schedule 14A related to our Annual Meeting of Shareholders, filed on March 8, 2013 (only with respect to information contained in such Definitive Proxy Statement that is incorporated into Part III of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2012);
- our Current Report on form 8-K filed with the SEC on February 15, 2013; and
- the description of our common stock contained in our registration statement on Form 8-A filed with the SEC on October 14, 2003, as amended by our Forms 8-A/A filed with the SEC on December 17, 2004 and April 26, 2007, including any amendments or reports filed for the purpose of updating such description.

We may file additional documents with the SEC pursuant to Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act on or after the date of this prospectus and before the expiration of the offering. The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference into this prospectus such documents. You should consider any statement contained in this prospectus (or in a document incorporated into this prospectus) or any prospectus supplement to be modified or superseded to the extent that a statement in a subsequently filed document modifies or supersedes such statement.

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.

DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK

The following is a summary of the material terms of our capital stock and the provisions of our certificate of incorporation and by-laws. It also summarizes some relevant provisions of the General Corporation Law of the State of Delaware, which we refer to as Delaware law or the DGCL. Since the terms of our certificate of incorporation, by-laws, and Delaware law are more detailed than the general information provided below, you should only rely on

the actual provisions of those documents and Delaware law. If you would like to read those documents, they are on file with the SEC as described under the heading “Where You Can Find More Information.”

General

Centene's authorized capital stock consists of 110 million shares, of which:

- 100 million shares are designated as common stock, par value $.001 per share, and
- 10 million shares are designated as preferred stock, par value $.001 per share.

As of March 28, 2013, Centene had 52,396,734 shares of common stock issued and outstanding and no shares of preferred stock issued and outstanding.

Common Stock

Each share of our common stock entitles the holder to one vote on all matters submitted to a vote of stockholders, including the election of directors. Subject to any preference rights of holders of preferred stock, the holders of common stock are entitled to receive dividends and other distributions in cash, stock or property, if any, declared from time to time by the directors out of legally available funds. In the event of our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, the holders of common stock are entitled to share ratably in all assets remaining after the payment of liabilities, subject to any rights of holders of preferred stock to prior distribution. In the event of a merger or consolidation, the holders of each share of common stock shall be entitled to receive the same per share consideration on a per share basis. Holders of common stock have no cumulative voting rights. The common stock has no preemptive or conversion rights or other subscription rights. No redemption or sinking fund provisions apply to the common stock. All outstanding shares of common stock are fully paid and nonassessable, and the shares of common stock to be issued upon the completion of this offering will be fully paid and nonassessable.

We may issue additional shares of authorized common stock without stockholder approval, subject to applicable rules of the NYSE and Delaware law.

The transfer agent and registrar for the common stock is Broadridge Corporate Issuer Solutions, Inc.. Information about Broadridge Corporate Issuer Solutions, Inc. may be obtained at (855) 627-5087. Our common stock is listed on the NYSE under the symbol “CNC.”

Preferred Stock

The following is a description of general terms and provisions of the preferred stock. All of the terms of the preferred stock are, or will be contained in our certificate of incorporation or in one or more certificates of designation relating to each series of the preferred stock, which will be filed with the SEC at or prior to the issuance of the series of preferred stock, and will be available as described under the heading “Where You Can Find More Information.”

Our board of directors is authorized, without further stockholder approval but subject to applicable rules of the NYSE and any limitations prescribed by law, to issue up to 10 million shares of preferred stock from time to time. Our board of directors has the discretion to provide for the issuance of all or any shares of preferred stock in one or more classes or series, and to fix for each such class or series such voting powers, full or limited, or no voting powers, and such designations, preferences and relative, participating, optional or other special rights and such qualifications, limitations or restrictions thereof, as shall be stated and expressed in the resolution or resolutions adopted by the board of directors providing for the issuance of such class or series, including, without limitation, the authority to provide that any such class or series may be:

- subject to redemption at such time or times and at such price or prices,
- entitled to receive dividends (which may be cumulative or non-cumulative) at such rates, on such conditions, and at such times, and payable in preference to, or in such relation to, the dividends payable on any other class or classes or any other series,
- entitled to such rights upon the dissolution of Centene or upon any distribution of our assets, or
- convertible into, or exchangeable for, shares of any other class or classes of stock or of any other series of the same or any other class or classes of stock of Centene at such price or prices or at such rates of exchange and with such adjustments as the board may determine.

The purpose of authorizing our board of directors to issue preferred stock and determine its rights and preferences is to eliminate delays associated with a stockholder vote on specific issuances. The issuance of preferred stock may provide desirable flexibility in connection with possible acquisitions and other corporate purposes, but could have the effect of making it more difficult for a third party to acquire, or could discourage a third party from acquiring, a majority of our outstanding voting stock.

Certain Effects of Authorized but Unissued Stock

We may issue additional shares of common stock or preferred stock without stockholder approval, subject to applicable rules of the NYSE and Delaware law, for a variety of corporate purposes, including future public or private offerings to raise

additional capital, corporate acquisitions, and employee benefit plans and equity grants. The existence of unissued and unreserved common and preferred stock may enable us to issue shares to persons who are friendly to current management, which could discourage an attempt to obtain control of Centene by means of a proxy contest, tender offer, merger or otherwise. We will not solicit approval of our stockholders for issuance of common and preferred stock unless our board of directors believes that approval is advisable or is required by applicable rules of the NYSE or Delaware law.

Limitation on Liability of Directors; Indemnification

Our certificate of incorporation provides that no director shall be personally liable to Centene or any of its stockholders for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty as a director, except to the extent such exemption from liability or limitation thereof is not permitted under the DGCL as the same exists or may hereafter be amended. If the DGCL is amended hereafter to authorize the further elimination or limitation of the liability of directors, then the liability of directors shall be eliminated or limited to the fullest extent authorized by the DGCL, as so amended. Our certificate of incorporation further provides that any repeal or modification of this limitation of liability by our stockholders shall not adversely affect any right or protection of a director of Centene existing at the time of such repeal or modification with respect to acts or omissions occurring prior to such repeal or modification.

Our certificate of incorporation requires that we indemnify our directors and officers to the fullest extent authorized or permitted by law, as now or hereafter in effect, and that such right to indemnification shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be a director or officer and shall inure to the benefit of his or her heirs, executors and personal and legal representatives. Except for proceedings to enforce rights to indemnification, however, Centene shall not be obligated to indemnify in connection with a proceeding (or part thereof) if such director, officer or successor in interest initiated such proceeding (or part thereof) unless such proceeding was authorized or consented to by the board of directors. The right to indemnification includes the right to be paid the expenses incurred in defending or otherwise participating in any proceeding in advance of its final disposition. Any repeal or modification by the stockholders of indemnification or advancement rights shall not adversely affect any rights to indemnification and to the advancement of expenses of a director or officer of Centene existing at the time of such repeal or modification with respect to any acts or omissions occurring prior to such repeal or modification.

The board of directors may in its discretion provide rights to indemnification and to the advancement of expenses to employees and agents of Centene similar to those described above.

The inclusion of these provisions in our certificate of incorporation and by-laws may have the effect of reducing the likelihood of derivative litigation against our directors and may discourage or deter Centene or its stockholders from bringing a lawsuit against our directors for breach of their duty of care, even though such an action, if successful, might otherwise have benefited Centene and its stockholders.

Anti-Takeover Effects of Provisions of Delaware Law and Our Certificate of Incorporation and By-Laws

Some of the provisions in our certificate of incorporation and by-laws and Delaware law could have the following effects, among others:

- delaying, deferring or preventing a change in control of Centene;
- delaying, deferring or preventing the removal of our existing management or directors;
- deterring potential acquirors from making an offer to our stockholders; and
- limiting our stockholders' opportunity to realize premiums over prevailing market prices of our common stock in connection with offers by potential acquirors.

The following is a summary of some of the provisions in our certificate of incorporation and by-laws that could have the effects described above. We believe that the benefits of increased protection of our potential ability to negotiate with the proponent of an unfriendly or unsolicited proposal to acquire or restructure us outweigh the disadvantages of discouraging takeover or acquisition proposals because negotiation of these proposals could result in an improvement of their terms.

Delaware Business Combination Statute. We must comply with Section 203 of the Delaware General Corporation Law, an anti-takeover law. In general, Section 203 prohibits a publicly held Delaware corporation from engaging in a "business combination" with an "interested stockholder" for a period of three years following the date the person became an interested stockholder, unless the business combination or the transaction in which the person became an interested stockholder is approved in a prescribed manner. Generally, a "business combination" includes a merger, asset or stock sale, or other transaction resulting in a financial benefit to an interested stockholder. An "interested stockholder" includes a person who, together with affiliates and associates, owns, or did own within three years prior to the determination of interested stockholder status, 15% or more of the

corporation's voting stock. The existence of this provision generally will have an anti-takeover effect for transactions not approved in advance by the board of directors, including discouraging attempts that might result in a premium over the market price for the shares of common stock held by stockholders.

Other Supermajority Voting Requirements. In addition to the supermajority requirement for certain business combinations discussed above, Centene's certificate of incorporation also contains other supermajority requirements, including:

- a requirement that the vote of 75% of the outstanding shares of common stock (and any other voting shares that may be outstanding) entitled to vote generally in the election of directors is required to remove a director, with or without cause; and
- a requirement that the vote of 75% of the outstanding shares of common stock (and any other voting shares that may be outstanding) entitled to vote generally in the election of directors is required for the stockholders to adopt, amend, alter or repeal the by-laws; and
- a requirement that any amendment or repeal of specified provisions of Centene's certificate of incorporation (including provisions relating to directors and amendment of our by-laws) must be approved by at least 75% of the outstanding shares of our common stock (and any other voting shares that may be outstanding) entitled to vote generally in the election of directors.

Actions at Meetings of Stockholders; Special Meetings. Our certificate of incorporation and by-laws require that any action required or permitted to be taken by our stockholders must be effected at a duly called annual or special meeting of the stockholders and may not be effected by a consent in writing. In addition, special meetings of our stockholders may be called only by the board of directors or some of our officers. These provisions may have the effect of deterring hostile takeovers or delaying or preventing changes in our control or management.

Classified Board of Directors. Our certificate of incorporation and by-laws provide that our board of directors will be divided into three classes of directors serving staggered three-year terms. Each class, to the extent possible, will be equal in number. Each class holds office until the third annual stockholders' meeting for election of directors following the most recent election of such class.

Directors, and Not Stockholders, Fix the Size of the Board of Directors. Our certificate of incorporation and by-laws provide that the number of directors will be fixed from time to time exclusively pursuant to a resolution adopted by a majority of our board of directors, but in no event will it consist of less than five nor more than eleven directors.

Board Vacancies to Be Filled by Remaining Directors and Not Stockholders. Under our certificate of incorporation and by-laws, any vacancy created by any reason prior to the expiration of the term in which the vacancy occurs will be filled by a majority of the remaining directors, even if less than a quorum. A director elected to fill a vacancy will be elected for the unexpired term of his predecessor.

Advance Notice for Stockholder Proposals. Our by-laws contain provisions requiring that advance notice be delivered to Centene of any business to be brought by a stockholder before an annual meeting and providing for procedures to be followed by stockholders in nominating persons for election to our board of directors. Ordinarily, the stockholder must give notice not less than 60 days nor more than 90 days prior to the anniversary date of the immediately preceding annual meeting; provided, however, that in the event that the date of the meeting is not within 30 days before or after such date, notice by the stockholder must be received not later than the 10th day following the day on which such notice of the date of the meeting was mailed or on which such public notice was given. The notice must include a description of the proposal, the reasons for the proposal, and other specified matters. Our board of directors may reject any proposals that have not followed these procedures or that are not a proper subject for stockholder action in accordance with the provisions of applicable law.

LEGAL MATTERS

The validity of the common stock offered hereby has been passed upon for us by Bryan Cave LLP, St. Louis, Missouri.

EXPERTS

The consolidated financial statements of Centene Corporation as of December 31, 2012 and 2011, and for each of the years in the three-year period ended December 31, 2012, and the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2012 have been incorporated by reference herein in reliance upon the reports of KPMG LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, incorporated by reference herein, and upon the authority of said firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

Centene Corporation
Up to $15,300,000 of Common Stock

PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT

April 1, 2013