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## **PRICIER CIGARETTES WOULD CURB SMOKING, MARIJUANA USE: UIC STUDY**

Raising the federal excise tax on cigarettes – as proposed by President Clinton – won't encourage young cigarette smokers to use marijuana instead, an economist from the University of Illinois at Chicago predicts in a new study.

Until recently, opponents of tobacco legislation argued that a drastic increase in cigarette prices would make marijuana more affordable and entice teens into using the illegal substance instead of tobacco. Not so, says Frank Chaloupka, associate professor of economics at UIC and the study's leading author.

“While cigarettes are believed to be a ‘gateway drug’ that encourages experimentation with more potent substances, no economic research had been done to determine whether cigarettes and marijuana are economic complements or substitutes,” said Chaloupka. “This research begins to fill that void.”

Chaloupka and his colleagues examined the impact of cigarette prices, tobacco control policies and marijuana policies, as well as the relationship between the demands for cigarettes and marijuana, among a 1992-1994 nationally representative sample of eighth, 10th and 12th graders.

“Our research clearly shows that higher cigarette prices will not increase marijuana use,” Chaloupka said. “In fact, in addition to lowering the demand for cigarettes, we found that higher cigarette prices would likely have a negative effect on youth marijuana use.”

The complete text of the UIC study can be found in the article titled “Do Higher Cigarette Prices Encourage Youth to Use Marijuana?” in February's *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper Series*.

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