**Mission Statement:**

Canada is considered one of the healthiest nations in the world, but this good health is not shared by all who reside within it. Despite being one of the youngest and fastest-growing groups1, our Indigenous population faces grave health inequalities. This includes a lower life expectancy by as much as 15 years, as well as higher rates of infant mortality, suicide, hospitalizations due to mental illness, chronic illnesses, and infectious diseases2. The health inequalities experienced have primarily been a result of settler colonialism which displaced First Nations to remote communities that lack resources, amongst other detriments3.

The Waterloo Health Organization aims to respond to this inequality through our application *NOOJIMO*. Derived from the Objibwen word for healing4, our application takes a holistic approach that incorporates both indigenous and western perspectives on health. With *NOOJIMO* residents within indigenous communities can more easily access health services and other associated facilities. Nearby health amenities - including hospitals, mental health clinics, healing lodges, and community centres - can be identified based on a user’s location. Once the desired amenity has been identified, directions and estimated travel times are provided. Beyond its benefits to individuals, *NOOJIMO* can also be used by planners or governing authorities to identify areas with insufficient access to health care, which can in turn inform responsive programs or policy development.

Through our application, the Waterloo Health Organization aims to support the United Nations’ objective of [reducing inequality](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/goal-10/) in its various forms as well as to respond to the [Calls to Action](http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf) identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

**Statement of Characteristics:**

The goal of the Waterloo Health Organization's app *NOOJIMO* is to provide a streamlined tool for indigenous communities in Ontario to locate nearby health amenities and services, as they relate to the individual needs of community members. The simplistic and easy-to-operate web app interface enables a variety of user groups to search for nearby health amenities, depending on their need, and provides directions from point A to point B. The app is tailored to improving health access and reducing inequality, as it offers the ability to search for amenities by reserve, includes many options for traditional and indigenous specific health services, and lists amenity categories in English, French, and Ojibwe. Secondary to its ability to locate health amenities, the app also serves as a tool for policy makers, planners, and developers to identify areas throughout Ontario that lack equal access to healthcare and are in need of improved infrastructure.

References:

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3. Public Health Agency of Canada. (2018). Key Health Inequalities in Canada: A National Portrait. Retrieved from (<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/science-research/key-health-inequalities-canada-national-portrait-executive-summary/key_health_inequalities_full_report-eng.pdf>
4. Livesay, N. & Nichols, J. (2020). *Noojimo.* The Ojibwe People’s Dictionary. Retrieved from <https://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/main-entry/noojimo-vai>