Public Comment from TOWER:

We at Tower work with hospitals and health systems to look at their technology implementations from the patient's perspective and believe this rating system will help educate providers on the appropriateness of their educational content and lead to improvements. This project is starting with audiovisual and printable materials, but it will also be important to evolve to a point of reviewing and rating new emerging technologies being applied to facilitate patient education and learning. This includes social media and mobile applications.

Don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

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AHRQ's Response:

Dear Ms. Thielst,

Thank you for your thoughtful comments. We appreciate your feedback that our development of the health information rating system is an important step towards helping providers understand the appropriateness of the patient education materials they are using. As you point out, we are starting with printable and audiovisual materials, the latter of which is already an advancement over existing instruments. Your suggestion to consider "reviewing and rating new emerging technologies" is an important one. Unfortunately the rating system being developed in present project will not cover these technologies. The subject of social media and mobile applications is, however, a hot topic at the Institute of Medicine's Roundtable on Health Literacy and the issues you raise are undoubtedly ones we will grapple with in the future. Again, thank you for your comments and suggestions.