**Legal and Ethical Conduct**

As emphasized in this week’s media presentation, all nurses need to be familiar with the laws and regulations that govern their practice: their state’s Nurse Practice Act, ANA’s *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*, specialty group standards of practice, etc. In addition, basic ethical principles guide nurses’ decision-making process every day. ANA’s *Code of Ethics* and ANA’s *Social Policy* Statement are two important documents that outline nurses’ ethical responsibilities to their patients, themselves, and their profession. This said, there is a dilemma: The laws are not always compatible with the ethical positions nurses sometimes take. This week’s Discussion focuses on such a dilemma.

**To prepare:**

* Review this week’s Learning Resources, focusing on the information in the media presentation about the relationship between the law and ethics.
* Consider the ethical responsibility of nurses in ensuring patient autonomy, beneficence, non-malfeasance, and justice.
* Read the following scenario:

Lena is a community health care nurse who works exclusively with HIV-positive and AIDS patients. As a part of her job, she evaluates new cases and reviews confidential information about these patients. In the course of one of these reviews, Lena learns that her sister’s boyfriend has tested HIV positive. Lena would like to protect her sister from harm and begins to consider how her sister can find out about her boyfriend’s health status.
* Consult at least two resources to help you establish Lena’s legal and ethical position. These resources might include your state’s (Alabama) Nurse Practice Act, the ANA’s Code of Ethics, ANA’s Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, and internal or external standards of care.
* Consider what action you would take if you were Lena and why.
* Determine whether the law and the ANA’s standards support or conflict with that action.

**Assignment** a 1- page description of the actions you would take in this situation, and why. Justify these actions by referencing appropriate laws, ethical standards, and professional guidelines. Must use at least 3 references in apa style. Must be original, no plagiarism