§ 135-b. Departments of occupational therapy in connection with public general hospitals and tuberculosis hospitals or sanatoria. Any municipal corporation maintaining a public general hospital or a hospital or sanatorium for the treatment of tuberculosis under the provisions of any general or special law may establish, equip and maintain, in connection therewith, a department of occupational therapy. For the purpose of this section occupational therapy is defined as any activity, mental or physical, prescribed, guided or supervised for any patient for the purpose of contributing to and hastening his recovery from disease or injury. The appropriate municipal authorities may appropriate or provide funds for the establishment, equipment and operation of such occupational therapy departments in the same manner as for the establishment, equipment and operation of such public general hospitals, tuberculosis hospitals or sanatoria. Such occupational therapy department shall be under the general superintendence, management and control of the municipal authority, board of managers, or other agency having general superintendence, management and control of the public general hospital, tuberculosis hospital or sanatorium to which it may be attached.

The chief medical officer of such public general hospital, tuberculosis hospital or sanatorium shall have authority to employ one or more occupational therapists to carry on the work of such department under his supervision. The qualifications of occupational therapists so employed shall be defined by the public health and health planning council.

The chief medical officer of the institution may sell any article made or manufactured by any patient in his prescribed curative work carried on in such occupational therapy department to such patient upon payment by such patient to such chief medical officer of a sum not less than the cost of the material or materials from which such article was made or manufactured. Such chief medical officer may, in behalf of any patient, dispose of any article, made or manufactured by him, at public or private sale, and from moneys derived from the sale of such article he may pay to the patient such portion thereof that the residue shall at least equal the cost of the material or materials.

Except in the case of hospitals or sanatoria maintained by counties having a county purchasing agent, the municipal authority, board of managers, or other agency having general superintendence, management and control of such public general hospital, tuberculosis hospital or sanatorium, may place the moneys accruing to the occupational therapy department, from the two sources hereinabove mentioned, in a fund, to be known as "The Occupational Therapy Fund. " The moneys in such fund at any time shall not exceed the sum of five hundred dollars. All receipts in excess of such sum, or all receipts, if such fund be not established, shall be paid into the treasury of the municipal corporation operating such hospital or sanatorium. The chief medical officer of the institution may directly purchase with moneys from "The Occupational Therapy Fund," if such a fund shall have been established, such materials, in addition to those provided for the operation of such occupational therapy department as hereinabove authorized, as are necessary to the proper functioning of such department.

The chief medical officer may, in his discretion and if he deems such course to be in the best interest of any patient, temporarily withhold any or all moneys earned by such patient and shall give such moneys to such patient upon discharge.