

Third, the tremendous *time scale* pressures that you will face necessitate greater efficiency in the ambulatory clinic compared to the wards. By the end of the year, you'll have 6-8 scheduled patients per half day of clinic. You will be expected to function as a primary care provider in Boise and experience the shifts to increased uncertainty and more collaboration with an interdisciplinary team of



Figure 9. Boise VA Collage. Adapted from public domain images, iStockphoto, and Flickr<sup>12,13</sup>

healthcare professionals. Panel sizes here are large and continuity with the patient is important. You will be expected to respond to telephone inquiries, medication refill requests, and follow-up test results in a timely manner. It will also be your responsibility to provide a warm hand-off to your attending supervisor during times of transition (before an "away" rotation, annual leave, sick leave, end of year, etc.).

With such demands in mind, remember that Francis M. Peabody's maxim, while written in 1927, still holds true:

"The treatment of a disease may be entirely impersonal; the care of a patient must be completely personal" and "one of the essential qualities of the clinician is interest in humanity, for the secret of the care of the patient is in caring for the patient."<sup>14</sup>

Along with your technical skill as a clinician, you must never take the human dimension lightly. In an ambulatory setting, you will succeed as a caring provider only as you make a long-term and more personal commitment to the patient than is typical of the inpatient ward.