Success from two leading coronavirus vaccine programs likely means other frontrunners will also show strong protection against COVID-19, Bill Gates said Tuesday.

The fact that two coronavirus vaccines recently showed strong protection against COVID-19 bodes well for other leading programs led by AstraZeneca, Novavax, and Johnson & Johnson, Bill Gates said Tuesday.The billionaire Microsoft founder and philanthropist said it will be easier to boost manufacturing and distribute these other shots to the entire world, particularly developing nations.The vaccine space has seen a flurry of good news in recent days, marked by overwhelming success in late-stage trials by both Pfizer and Moderna. The studies showed both vaccines provided strong protection against the virus compared to a placebo. "With the very good news from Pfizer and Moderna, we think it's now likely that AstraZeneca, Novavax, and Johnson & Johnson will also likely show very strong efficacy," Gates told journalist Andrew Ross Sorkin.

While Gates didn't delve into the scientific rationale behind that prediction, many scientists hold the same hope. All the leading vaccine candidates target the same part of the coronavirus in the spike protein. Early-stage clinical trials showed all the shots elicited varying levels of neutralizing antibodies, virus-fighting proteins that play a critical role in the body's immune response. But the only way to know if that translates to protection is by running late-stage trials that enroll tens of thousands for volunteers who receive either the experimental shot or placebo injections. The scientific success has turned the top challenges surrounding a COVID-19 vaccine to the manufacturing and distribution front. Gates noted that the world will be supply constrained for 2021, but these additional vaccines will prove valuable on that front.